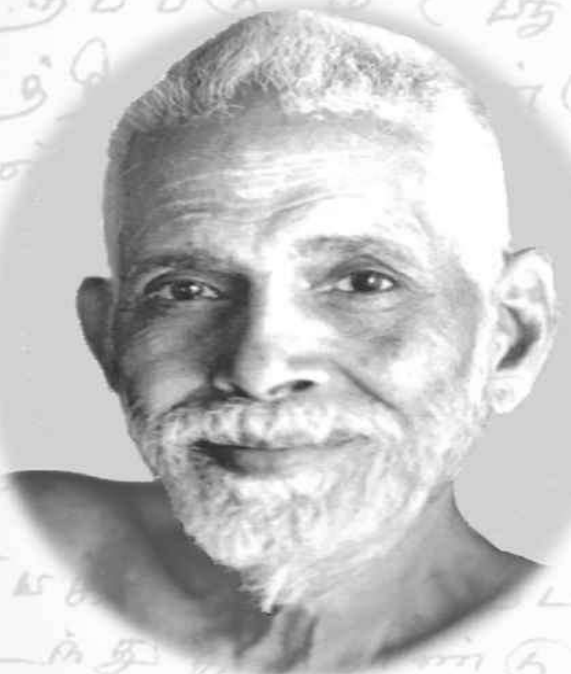


Nectar Drops

The Diary of Sri Satguru Annamalai Swamigal

A dedicated disciple of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi



Notes of my interactions with my Guru
Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi

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Sri Satguru Annamalai Swamigal Spiritual Trust
2022

Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi

Sri Annamalai Swami with Sri Bhagavan

Preface

Om Namo Bhagavathe Sri Ramanaya
Om Sri Satguru Annamalai Swami Namaha

Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi is unique among *Brahma Jnanis*. He attained enlightenment at the tender age of sixteen in Madurai and reached Arunachala the heart of the earth and land of *Jnana*, known as Tiruvannamalai. Abiding in the state of *Sahaja Atma Samadhi*, he attracted spiritual seekers from all over the world and guided them towards Self-realization. Bhagavan Sri Ramana is the Sun of spiritual wisdom or *Jnana* that brightens the whole world.

Many of Bhagavan Sri Ramana's disciples attained *Atma Jnana* or Self-realization (enlightenment) through his guidance. Among them, Satguru Annamalai Swami was unique. At the age of 19, he surrendered himself totally to Bhagavan and accepted him as his *Satguru* by offering his body, mind, and soul in absolute surrender, serving him from 1928 to 1942. During that period Sri Annamalai Swami under Bhagavan's close supervision constructed various buildings for Ramanashramam including the office, bookstall, *gosala*, *veda patasala*, storeroom, kitchen, dining hall and hospital.

In 1938, Sri Bhagavan agreed that Sri Annamalai Swami should move to Pelakothu, a small area just west of Ramanashramam, to lead a solitary life of meditation. Sri Bhagavan continued his guidance until Sri Annamalai Swami was well established in the experience of the Self. Strictly following his Guru's words, Sri Annamalai Swami never left Pelakothu, spending the rest of his life in the state of *sahaja samadhi*. He attained *mahasamadhi* on November 9th, 1995.

This book is the English translation of a diary and two other notebooks that Sri Annamalai Swami filled with precious notes of his and other devotees' interactions with Sri Bhagavan. These notes were taken in the years 1938 and

1939 when Sri Annamalai Swami was 32 years old. His questions to Bhagavan, such as “How is a child different from a *Jnani*?”, “What is the difference between meditating with eyes open versus closed?”, “Can I practice *sahaja samadhi* right from the beginning?”, and “When I meditate, the *prana* gets suspended in the stomach. Is that good?” reveal an already mature state of mind.

Sri Bhagavan’s lucid responses to these questions were written down verbatim by the young Annamalai Swami. Seekers around the world are now blessed with the opportunity to read, reflect and practice the teachings that this diary abounds with. Immersing oneself in this book will effortlessly transport the reader to the very room where these divine conversations transpired.

This book includes pages from the original diary with Sri Annamalai Swami’s handwriting as well as selected photos of Sri Annamalai Swami. A special treat for readers is the page from the diary in which Bhagavan himself wrote in his beautiful print-like hand, a verse on the practice of *Advaita*.

We are deeply grateful to Mr. Sivakumar for his translation of the diary into English, and to Satchit Anandam and Sundaram Swami for editing the book. We are pleased to inform readers that *Brahma Jnani*, Sri Mahaprabu himself verified the translation and highlighted points of particular importance to seekers, in bold letters.

Special Note

By Sri Hamsananda Swami, Athithi Ashramam, 1995

Our country Bharata is a great and ancient land. Those who added glory to this country were *Jnanis* indeed. There is no doubt that among such *Jnanis* one who shone like the brilliant Sun was Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. Countless are those who in their search to quench their thirst for *Jnana* reached the shrine of Sri Ramana and attained heavenly bliss through his grace.

Sri Annamalai Swamigal was one such seeker who reached Sri Ramana as his sole refuge. This noble person came to Sri Ramana in 1928. Taking Sri Ramana as his *Jnana Guru*, he surrendered himself to him totally. Within a few days, he learnt that Sri Bhagavan was *Sarvajna* — the all-knowing, through an interesting incident. During the initial days when Sri Annamalai Swamigal came to Tiruvannamalai, a devotee by the name of Sri Ranganathan offered a plate full of eatables to Sri Bhagavan. Annamalai Swamigal took the responsibility of distributing the eatables to all. After offering them to those in the hall and then to those in the cowshed, what remained with him was 2 shares. Looking around and seeing no one there, Swamigal ate both the shares himself. Then while keeping the plate in the hall after washing it, Sri Bhagavan asked him, ‘What, did you eat 2 shares?’ From that day onwards knowing that Sri Bhagavan was omniscient he totally surrendered his body, mind, and soul to Sri Bhagavan.

On another occasion, Sri Annamalai Swamigal asked Sri Bhagavan, ‘How should one act without forgetting God at all times?’ Bhagavan did not reply. After some time, a few children came to Sri Bhagavan and played a Kummi song. They sang, ‘Let us churn the curd, without forgetting Sri Krishna!’ Sri Bhagavan looked at the disciple and asked with a benign smile on his face, ‘Have you understood now?’

Sri Bhagavan appointed Sri Annamalai Swamigal to supervise the construction of Sri Ramanashramam. Taking the work Sri Bhagavan gave him as his mission, Swamigal plunged into construction work with his whole heart. Sri Bhagavan shaped the psyche of Swamigal by giving him incessant work without giving him an opportunity for meditation. What is the use of trying to meditate assuming that there is a mind (which in fact is non-existent) and that one should control it? If we do our assigned duties with this determined resolve — ‘I am not this body and mind, the ever-present Self am I,’ then meditation will come searching for us.

Sri Bhagavan gave the disciple a book titled Maharshi Vaimozhi which he himself had bound and asked him to read the chapter ‘Work and Renunciation.’

Sri Swamiji often used to remember this saying from Ashtavakra Gita, “You have been bitten by the deadly black cobra of ego, O son, drink the nectar of faith ‘I am not the doer’ and attain bliss!”

For 12 years Sri Annamalai Swamigal supervised the construction of the Ashram day in and day out. The *veda patasala* in Sri Ramanashramam, the kitchen, dispensary, cowshed and storeroom were all constructed under the supervision of Sri Annamalai Swamigal as ordained by Sri Bhagavan.

Yogi Ramayya once said to Sri Bhagavan, ‘Annamalai Swamigal has gone down so much, carrying out Sri Bhagavan’s work!’ ‘Yes, indeed we have to give him rest!’ said Sri Bhagavan. After a few days of this incident, Annamalai Swami and Madhava Swami went with Sri Bhagavan to the bathroom. After Sri Bhagavan finished bathing, Madhava Swami asked Sri Bhagavan, ‘O Bhagavan! How will the enjoyment be of those who take *ganja* (an intoxicating drug)?’ ‘O that one! How can I describe their *ananda* in words!’ Saying these words and acting like an intoxicated person, Sri Bhagavan embraced Sri Annamalai Swami, who was standing near him, and

exclaimed, ‘*Anandam! Anandam!*’ and said ‘This is how their *anandam* will be!’ before leaving for a stroll by the hill-side.

As a result, Sri Annamalai Swamigal was blessed with the experience of *samadhi* for about 20 minutes, completely losing his body consciousness. A few days after this incident, Swamigal took the blessings of Sri Bhagavan and came to stay in Pelakothu. This happened in the year 1938.

Sri Annamalai Swamigal went to Sri Ramanashramam regularly for the *darshan* of Sri Bhagavan till 1942. That year, Sri Bhagavan advised Sri Annamalai Swamigal, ‘You need not come to the Ashram to see me, do not go to any place leaving Pelakothu!’ Swamigal did exactly as Bhagavan told. Later, as commanded by Sri Bhagavan, Swamigal observed silence for one year.

One day, Sri Bhagavan said, ‘From now your only food intake should be a coconut, a mango, some ground nuts and some jaggery. Initially, you will have loose motions, do not be afraid of it. It will be alright in due course.’ After one year like this, Sri Bhagavan said, ‘Enough!’ and the penance came to an end. Then Sri Bhagavan blessed him, saying, ‘You are a free man!’

It was the year 1950, 14th April at 8.45 p.m. Sri Annamalai Swamigal was suffering from unbearable stomach pain. Slowly he climbed up the stairs and beheld the ‘Shining light of Grace.’ In the sky, there appeared a very bright light. The moment he saw that light his stomach pain vanished. Sri Swamigal realised that Sri Bhagavan had attained *mahanirvana*. Bound by the commands of Sri Bhagavan, he continued to stay in Pelakothu, abiding in his own Self-awareness.

Crowds of devotees came in pursuit of Sri Annamalai Swamigal, a repository of Peace who beheld the omnipresent Sri Bhagavan everywhere, both within

and without. Sri Annamalai Swamigal brought clarity to devotees who sought him, by speaking the words of Grace of Sri Bhagavan with enthusiasm.

We are releasing in book form what Sri Annamalai Swamigal directly heard and learnt from Sri Bhagavan, which he meticulously wrote down in his diary. May the devotees attain everlasting bliss reading this book which is indeed a treasure of *Jnana*!

Swami Hamsananda

Athithi Ashramam

Tiruvannamalai

Sri Annamalai Swami

Diary Part 1

Sri Annamalai Swami used a small calendar from the year 1938 as his diary. The very first page had a picture of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Sri Annamalai Swami's notes begin on the right, with the words '*Om Sri Ramana Satguru Padam Thunai*' (Om Sri Ramana Satguru's holy feet are my shelter). On the next line, he titled his diary '*Sri Ramana Bhagavan Updaesam*' (Sri Ramana Bhagavan's Teachings).

The first page of Sri Annamalai Swami's diary

During the years 1938-1939, Sri Annamalai Swami took meticulous notes of various interactions with Sri Bhagavan, filling a diary and two small notebooks with 126 of these priceless recordings. These notes are the unfiltered, unedited words of Sri Bhagavan, recorded in Tamil. The following pages are the translation of Sri Annamalai Swami's diary in its entirety. Items in bold, are the specific teachings that Sri Mahaprabu highlighted as points of particular importance to readers.

#1

He alone is a true man who performs without desire, all activities that come of their own accord, never letting go of Self-abidance.

#2

He who does not think that he is the doer is superior to the one who thinks that he has given up everything.

#3

A *sannyasi* who carries the notion “I am a *sannyasi*” (renunciate) is not a *sannyasi*. A *grihastha* (householder) who does not carry the notion – “I am a *grihastha*” is indeed a *sannyasi*.

#4

Each one perceives himself everywhere; World and God are mere reflections of one’s own state of mind.

#5

To enquire “Who am I” is the eradication of all sorrow, the attainment of supreme bliss.

#6

‘Is there not a medicine to escape from the miseries of the world?’ - To this question of mine, Sri Bhagavan responded: Abiding in the Self continuously without letting go is the medicine.

#7

Mouna (silence) is an unceasing speech. To be still is to be forever active.

#8

Mouna is the means for supreme attainment.

#9

One day I asked Sri Bhagavan, “How did Sri Vishnu Bhagavan give *darshan* (a view of a holy being) to Namadeva, Tukaram and Tulsidas? How did they perceive Him?”

Sri Bhagavan responded, “How? Just like this. You are seeing me. I am seeing you - they would have seen Him just like this too.” My hair stood on end and bliss ensued.

#10

On one occasion, to my question, “Remaining engaged in outer activities, how is one to do *bhakti* (devotion)?” Sri Bhagavan did not respond immediately. Ten minutes passed by. Some girls came for Sri Bhagavan’s *darshan* and began singing a *Kummi* song (a specific style of folk song from Tamil Nadu) ‘Let us churn curd without forgetting Krishna’, they sang as they danced.

Immediately Sri Bhagavan graciously responded, “Oye! This is the answer to your question; this indeed is *Karma Yogam*.”

#11

Desire alone is *maya* (illusory appearance of the phenomenal world).
Dispassion indeed is Divine.

#12

One night, I asked Bhagavan: Westerners, using their brain-power have invented the airplane which can cross so many oceans in an hour and take people along with it. Likewise, why doesn’t Sri Bhagavan with *Atma Shakti*

(the power of Atma) quickly carry us across this ocean of *samsara* (the cycle of birth and death), in a convenient airplane?

Sri Bhagavan's reply: Right now, all of us are indeed traveling at great speed, only we are not aware of it. If you ask how, it is like the naive folk who while travelling by a fast train for the first time wonder "How is it that we appear to be sitting in the same place!" We all laughed.

#13

He who thinks 'I am the body' is a self-destructive sinner. He who thinks 'I am *Atman*' is supremely virtuous. If one meditates 'I am *Atman*' for a moment, it destroys *sanchita karmas* (the totality of all *karma* accumulated in an individual's past lives) just like the sun dispels darkness. For one who unceasingly meditates thus, can loads of *karma* remain undestroyed?

#14

The page from the diary that is translated below

To my question, "To be in meditation some time and to be engaged in activity at other times - What is the difference between the two?", Sri Bhagavan graciously replied: To meditate and to engage in activity are both the same. It is just like naming the same object in two languages; like the crow seeing both sides with one eye (it is said that the crow rolls the same iris into each eye to see any object); like the elephant using the same trunk to breathe as well as to drink; like the cobra using the same pair of eyes to see and hear.

He further graciously recited this verse from **Kaivalya Navaneetham (Chapter 2, Verse 173)**:

I am pure consciousness and whole. Remaining firmly aware thus, what does it matter however much one thinks or whatever one does? Like the dream that vanishes on waking from sleep, all is unreal. I am the very form of bliss.

#15

One day, while climbing the hill, I asked Sri Bhagavan, “What is the difference between meditating with eyes closed and meditating with eyes open?”

Sri Bhagavan’s reply: Standing at a distance, if one throws a rubber ball at a wall, it rebounds towards him. But if one throws it while standing close to the wall, it rebounds away from him. Likewise, if the eyes are closed the mind runs here and there. This (practice) is only for the unripe ones.

All that is seen is unreal – discarding thus,

eyes closed in contemplation

I seek to abide for a moment

Striving to still the mind.

Alas! The wretched karmas assail.

—Thayumanavar, Paripoornanandam, Verse 4

#16

To my question as to how the same happiness experienced in meditation can also be found in activity, Sri Bhagavan replied, “Happiness and misery are akin to one’s mind. Happiness is our inherent nature. To think ‘I am the body’ or ‘I am the mind’ while ignoring the Self is misery. What to do? The thought ‘I am the body’ has gathered strength over many births. If this is eradicated, what remains is happiness.”

#17

One day a visitor approached Bhagavan and asked: Because there are so many bad people in this world, it has become so difficult. How is one to be happy amidst this?

Sri Bhagavan's reply: For us, all are good indeed, because the wicked through their harmful deeds seem to warn us 'Do not come near me' and the good always do good. So, all are Gurus.

#18

One evening when Bhagavan and I were taking a stroll by the hillside, I asked him, "I wish to stay in a solitary place undisturbed by anyone. I should get a morsel of food by providence. Forever I should be in meditation, eyes shut, unaware of the world - such a thought often occurs to me. Is it good?"

Sri Bhagavan's reply: Thinking like that will entail one more birth. How does it matter where one is? The mind should forever abide in the Self. Other than this, there is no such thing as a solitary place outside. Wherever one stays with thoughts, such a place is already crowded. One does not need to meditate always with eyes shut. It is enough to shut the mind. There is no world outside the mind. Those who tread the righteous path will not make such plans. Why? Before we are ushered into this world, God has already ordained the course of our lives.

#19

One day, a group of people came for Sri Bhagavan's *darshan* and departed after praying, "O Bhagavan! grant us *bhakti* (devotion) and *moksha* (liberation)."

Later Bhagavan told us, **“Everyone indeed wants to attain *moksha*, but when I say ‘Give yourself unto me’ they are unwilling to comply. Then how will *moksha* be attained?”**

I understood that Bhagavan’s words were meant for us.

#20

Once there arose a big debate amongst the devotees of Sri Bhagavan that lasted several days regarding the relative stature and greatness of certain individuals. This led to the formation of two groups, each upholding their point of view. Finally, the matter landed in Sri Bhagavan’s court. Sri Bhagavan was asked which of the two groups got it right. Bhagavan kept silent without answering. Hence, none had any clarity as to what was right and who was greater. They continued further, debating vigorously in Sri Bhagavan’s presence.

Realizing that they would not spare him, being the enchanter he was, Bhagavan began to speak. Craftily, he spoke endearing words to one group first, and then similarly to the other. In the end, he gave general words of advice. “Irrespective of who does what, what exists as Truth alone lasts forever. No one can bestow bondage or *moksha* to anyone. It is natural for everyone to expect that the whole world should recognize and shower praises on them. Yet, by thinking so, one cannot attain happiness or greatness because one who is not dear to God is lowly indeed. He who surrenders his body and mind in whatsoever way, *Iswara* (God) raises him to be acknowledged and admired by the world.”

As examples, Sri Bhagavan quoted the following songs from Vairagya Satakam, Sivabogha Saaram and Sivananda Lahari.

*You desire that the world should proclaim you as a Great one
The Iswara who resides in you alone confers bondage or freedom
What avails it if others know it or not
Be devoted to the Lotus feet of God, oh, mind,
Then Iswara would raise you to be acknowledged and admired by the world.*
—Vairagya Satakam

*The Scriptures extol the greatness of those
Who do not seek their own greatness
Pray tell me, who else shall bear the pain of the world
other than those who trumpet that they are great?*
—Sivabogha Saram

*Nothing impossible is there to attain,
For him who sings about your holy feet,
Oh, consort of Bhavani,
For the god of death runs away,
Afraid of the kick from the Lord's feet,
The lights shining in those jeweled tiaras of all the devas
show the offering of the camphor light,
and the pretty bride called liberation,
folds him in a tight embrace, as soon as she sees him.*
—Sivananda Lahari

#21

In 1938, due to bad company, I was assailed by sexual desire. “Alas! How am I to redeem myself if I have such thoughts?” Worrying thus without food and sleep and crying earnestly, for three days I had no peace of mind. At last, I thought of divulging this to Sri Bhagavan and seek a remedy. At one night when Sri Bhagavan was going out, I approached him and sought his advice

saying, “Ever since I was assailed by sexual desire that day, I have not had proper food and sleep for the last three days. Since this is happening often, what will be my fate?”

After two minutes of silence, Sri Bhagavan graciously said, “Why should one dwell on a bad thought that occurred long back? If one enquires as to whom this thought occurred, it would take flight.”

#22

I once asked Bhagavan: A person who only does good deeds still undergoes suffering, while another despite committing bad deeds does not encounter suffering. How do you explain this paradox?

Sri Bhagavan’s response: **Each one encounters happiness and misery alternately according to their karmic deposits from past births. Remaining indifferent to happiness and misery, accepting both with patience while abiding in the Self irrespective of whatever activity one happens to be engaged in, that alone is good.**

#23

My question: How is it that one can attain the abode of *moksha* easily by the grace of the Guru?

Sri Bhagavan’s response: There is no such abode of *moksha* anywhere outside. It is only within oneself. Whoever has an earnest desire to attain *moksha*, the inner Guru gives him his hand and pulls him in from within. The outer Guru lends his hand and pushes him in from outside. This is *Guru Krupai* (Guru’s grace).

As an example, Sri Bhagavan refers to the following song from Kaivalya Navaneetham:

*O Lord, abiding within and having ruled over countless births
O Embodiment of truth, who manifested as Guru to instruct me - Praise Thee
This poor being has nothing to offer in return for your help in redeeming me
and bestowing Freedom — Praise thy holy feet.*

#24

One day in 1938, a lady who was serving in the Congress party came for Sri Bhagavan's *darshan*. After a while she asked Sri Bhagavan, "Many great sages like you have travelled around for the good of the world, giving lectures and bringing the light of knowledge to people. Unlike them, if Sri Bhagavan, having attained supreme *Jnana* sits blissfully in silence somewhere in a corner by himself – How does this benefit the world?"

Sri Bhagavan replied with a smile: To know oneself and to abide in that state alone is the greatest benefit to the world. Taking to the stage and giving lectures can be of benefit to only a few during that time, whereas the eloquence of silence can be heard by the whole world forever. It works eternally.

#25

On January 25th, 1938, a devotee approached Sri Bhagavan and asked three questions in writing:

1. Did God create this world with all these differences right in the beginning? Or did these differences creep in later?

2. If God is impartial, how is it that he has created some as good and many as bad, one as lame, another as blind, one as *Jnani*, and many as *ajnanis*?
3. Are the eight *dikpalas* (deities of directions e.g., East, West, etc.) thirty-three crores of Gods and the seven *rishis* (sages) existent even today?

After glancing through these questions, Sri Bhagavan immediately answered all of them in a single sentence: The answer will be plain to you if you ask yourself to whom these questions arose.

This reply was not clear to the seeker.

Sri Bhagavan explained: If we first come to know our Self, then the Truth about God and the world he created will be revealed to us. Without knowing the Self, seeking to know God and the world, is merely ignorance. A man suffering from jaundice sees everything yellow. If he tells others that everything is yellow who will accept his statement?

Further, that which is created anew is only a rehash of the old. As an example, Sri Bhagavan cites *Bijangura Nyaya*: How is an entire banyan tree hidden in the banyan seed? How could you say which came first, the seed or the tree? If one knows the Self, there is no world. If one knows the world, the Self is not perceived.

Without knowing the true nature of oneself, knowing about all other things is merely ignorance, not Wisdom.

—Ulladu Narpadu Verse 11, line 1

If one considers oneself the form of this body of flesh, then the world and God will also be forms.

—Ulladu Narpadu Verse 4, line 1

If the Self is realised, what else is there to know?
—Ulladu Narpadu Verse 3, line 1

The page from Sri Annamalai Swami's diary dated January 25th, 1938

A young Sri Annamalai Swami (far left), with Bhagavan and devotees

Sri Annamalai Swami with cow Lakshmi

Sri Annamalai Swami (standing far left) with Bhagavan and devotees

*Sri Annamalai Swami (right), seen with Bhagavan outside the bathroom
where Swami experienced samadhi for the first time*

People cannot judge one's inner state from one's actions. To illustrate, Sri Bhagavan narrated the following stories.

1. Life of Thondaradippodi Azhvar
2. Life of Kaduveli Siddhar
3. Life of Sri Krishna
4. Life of a Devotee-King who kept his devotion a secret even from his wife

Narrating these stories, he further cited a verse from Vedanta Choodamani to explain that *jivanmuktas* (those who attained liberation in their bodily life) cannot be understood by their outer activities.

*Even though he is dead to the world, the Jivanmukta, due to his prarabdha karmas, appears as though he is
Attracted to objects of enjoyment,
Remaining silent sometimes,
Imparting various teachings in many ways,
Playing roles of misery and happiness,
Naked sometimes and well-dressed at other times,
Very knowledgeable yet appearing to be infatuated with women -
The deeds of such a one although unconventional are only the play of Grace -
have faith in him without an iota of doubt.*

#27

Sri Bhagavan often speaks about the meaning behind *namaskaram* (prostration) as follows:

Sometime in the past, elders used *namaskaram* as a practice to surrender their body and mind to God. Totally forgetting that, to think that by simply prostrating to God He will fall for us, and we can use him for all our needs is a big mistake, because God can never be deceived. It is only the selfish and fake worshipers who get deceived.

Also, I don't like it when people approach me to do *namaskaram*. What *namaskaram* does the Swami need? To keep one's mind on the right path is the true *namaskaram*.

#28

Writer Somerset Maugham came to Sri Ramanashramam on 30th January 1938 for Sri Bhagavan's *darshan*. He stayed in Chadwick's room. Unable to go to the old hall for Sri Bhagavan's *darshan* for some reason, he suddenly fainted in Chadwick's room. At once, Chadwick approached Sri Bhagavan and requested him to come to his room and see Maugham. Sri Bhagavan consented and without anyone's knowledge went to Chadwick's room. Seating himself on a chair that Chadwick offered him, he looked intently at Maugham. Immediately Maugham got up, greeted Bhagavan and took a seat opposite to him. Many were the questions he had wished to ask Sri Bhagavan, but words escaped him. Sri Bhagavan and Maugham remained silent for nearly 20 minutes just looking at each other. Later, Chadwick prompted Maugham to ask the questions he had wished to ask. Sri Bhagavan said in English, "Heart talk. All talk finished. Silence." Further, he graciously commented "We have finished our talking in Silence. In the end, it is all Silence."

We all laughed.

#29

February 4th, 1938.

One night a devotee asked Sri Bhagavan a question in reference to the opening lines of Atmavidya Kirtanam: You say “Lo! *Atma vidya* (the highest knowledge by which one experiences the Truth) is very easy! *Atma vidya* is indeed very easy!” **How is it that *Atma vidya* is easy?**

Sri Bhagavan: **A common example used to explain direct-perception, is the simile “as obvious as an *amalak* (gooseberry fruit) in one’s palm.” More directly perceptible than that, is the Self. To perceive an *amalak* in one’s palm, one needs *amalak* fruit, the palm to hold it, the eye to see it and a mind available to perceive it. Without these four, even those with little knowledge say, “I am. I slept well.” Since the self-awareness “I Am” is self-evident, *Atma vidya* is very easy. Enquiring who it is that wants to attain *Atma*, is the easiest way.**

#30

Indeed, the actual name of each and every one is *mukti*.

#31

February 6th, 1938.

Soon after lunch, Raja Gopal Iyer, a devotee from Salem, asked Sri Bhagavan about the ways to reach the peak of Holy Arunachala.

Sri Bhagavan told us the direct paths and said, “If one climbs slowly, it will not be a strain.”

Immediately, Subramanya Iyer said, “If Bhagavan accompanies us, we will not feel any strain.”

Sri Bhagavan said, “If I come along with you, everyone here will follow suit and these buildings will accompany us too!”

A lady devotee questioned, “Is Sri Bhagavan in a position to climb nowadays?”

Sri Bhagavan: Ah, yes! I can climb this hill and any other hill.

All laughed.

The notes from February 6th, 1938. Sri Bhagavan himself graced this diary with a venba, (bottom right) in his characteristic print-like hand. This verse is translated on the following page.

Sri Bhagavan used to say that *Advaita* (Vedantic doctrine of non-duality) should not be practised in outer activities (*kriya*).

“It is enough if there is no differentiation in the mind. If one keeps cartloads of discriminating thoughts within, one should not pretend that all is one on the outside. Under the pretext of equality and freedom, when people mix indiscriminately, we have seen what the result is. Only fights and battlefields are the legacy left behind. No one is happy as a result. This world is a huge theatre. Each person has to act whatever role is assigned to him. **It is the nature of the universe to be differentiated, but there should be no discrimination within.**” I was so moved by this saying of Sri Bhagavan that I requested Sri Bhagavan to summarise these ideas in Tamil verse. Sri Bhagavan, the ocean of compassion, composed a *venba* (poem) beginning with the words, ‘Always experience Advaita in the heart.’

I further requested Sri Bhagavan to write it in his own hand in my diary. Sri Bhagavan agreed and graciously wrote the following *venba* on February 16th, 1938. (This verse-39 is from the appendix of Ulladu Narpadu.)

*O son, forever experience Advaita in the heart,
Never ever practise it in action.
Advaitic attitude may befit the three worlds
Yet is improper towards the Guru, know this.
(Tattvopadesam)*

Bhagavan’s devotee Kakinada Seshayyar, after seeing the above verse, wrote the following verse for me on February 21st, 1938.

*In response to a devotee who sought
the lotus feet of Ramana - the embodiment of Vedas*

*To know whether it is proper to practise Advaita in action,
He compassionately gave a gracious venba - ponder thus!*

#33

February 18th, 1938.

During the night, a devotee asked Sri Bhagavan how long one should stay with the Guru: I read in The Sunday Times paper wherein Kanjangad Swami Ramdas had written that it is good for a disciple to stay away from the Guru after having *satsang* (association with Truth) with him for a short while and knowing the means of *sadhana* (spiritual practice). Otherwise, it will be akin to the stunted growth of a small tree growing in the shade of a big tree. I do not know whether this is right or wrong. Sri Bhagavan should please clarify this.

Sri Bhagavan pointed out the following verse from Kaivalya Navaneetham, (Chapter 2, Verse 2):

The pure-minded and earnest seeker of knowledge should hold on to the Guru like a young monkey clings to its mother, right from the time of wrong identification with the body constituted of five elements to the moment of attainment of Nirguna Vidheha Mukti.

He further said: Forever inseparable like a man and his shadow, is the life of one who is in *Gurukula Vaasam* (Living with the Guru). Then, where is the question of his leaving it to go somewhere, or his staying inside? For such a one, all places are *Gurukula Vaasam* alone.

#34

As various buildings were being constructed in the *asramam*, many engineers who came for Sri Bhagavan's *darshan* would offer their own designs and plans for these buildings. Since Chinnaswami, the *sarvadhikari* (manager-in-charge) insisted that all those plans had to be followed, one never knew exactly how a building was to be constructed. This led to differences of opinion and confusion between Chinnaswami and I. To resolve this, one day, I took those plans with me and approached Sri Bhagavan in search of a remedy.

Sri Bhagavan looked at the plans with little or no attention and said, "What has happened by which plan? All these works are planned already by some power, even before coming to this place. When the appropriate time comes, everything will definitely happen according to plan."

#35

One morning Sri Bhagavan said: One cannot correctly carry out an act just by merely seeing or hearing about it for the first time. Even in a trivial act, slip-ups do happen occasionally, despite having done it properly. If that is the case with ordinary actions, by merely learning once "I am *Atma*" or by simply hearing that from the Guru, how can one realize the Self?

He is pointing to verse #7 of Upadesa Undiyar:

*Better than meditating with gaps,
to meditate continuously is by far superior,
like the flow of a stream, like the flow of oil.*

#36

We asked Sri Bhagavan: What were we in our previous birth? How were we? How is it that we do not know the events of our previous births?

Sri Bhagavan replied with a smile: Put aside previous births. In this birth, it is enough to know who one is! God out of his compassion has kept the events of past lives hidden from the *jivas* (living beings) — for if one had known that one was a virtuous person in his previous birth, one may become proud; if one knew that one was a sinner in his previous birth, one may feel regret and think “Oh! I am a sinner. How will I redeem myself,” and will find it hard to uplift himself. Therefore, it is only good that we not know the events of our previous lives. The existing arrangement is the best indeed!

#37

True *bhakti* is to know oneself and to always remain thus, without forgetting it.

#38

Like the river on reaching the ocean ceases to flow, and merges with the ocean becoming one with it, so does one's mind become the *Atman* (*Anma mayam*) in the end, if one uninterruptedly meditates on the Self (*Atman*).

#39

To someone who asked: How to get rid of anger?, Sri Bhagavan replied: Be angry with anger. Desire indeed is the root cause of anger. Absence of desire is supreme bliss.

#40

After dinner, Sri Bhagavan used to go out and rinse his mouth. One night after supper I took the water kept in a tumbler and the torchlight and handed it to

Sri Bhagavan.

Sri Bhagavan said: Why? Will I not take it myself? Are you trying to make me lazy? All laughed.

#41

In 1936, in connection with a case filed by a devotee named Perumal Swami, the following are the questions asked purposely by his lawyer (with the intent to trap Bhagavan) and Sri Bhagavan's response to them:

Lawyer: Swami! What is your name?

Sri Bhagavan: People call me by so many names. Which one of those do I say is my name? (Laughter).

Lawyer: Don't people now call you Ramana Maharshi?

Sri Bhagavan: Yes.

Lawyer: As per Hindu *Shastras* (set of rules), of the four stages of life - *brahmacharyam*, *grihastham*, *vanaprastham* and *sannyasam* (student, householder, forest dweller and renunciate), to which *ashrama* (stage) do you belong?

Sri Bhagavan: I am beyond all these four *ashramas* - I am in *Athi Varnasramam* (one who has transcended the stages).

Lawyer: If so, are there no regulations pertaining to *Athi Varnasramam*? (Trying to trap Bhagavan)

Sri Bhagavan: **Because there aren't any regulations, it is *Athi Varnasramam*.**

Lawyer: So many people come to see you every day. Why?

Sri Bhagavan: They come of their own accord. I do not tell them to come, go or stay.

Lawyer: Do you have enemies?

Sri Bhagavan: I have neither enemies nor relations.

Lawyer: Who is your Guru?

Sri Bhagavan: I have neither Guru nor *sishya* (disciple).

Lawyer: Without Guru is it possible for one to achieve anything?

Sri Bhagavan: Indeed no.

Lawyer: Then who is your Guru?

Sri Bhagavan: *Atma* alone is Guru for me.

Lawyer: Who is the Guru for *Atma*?

Sri Bhagavan: *Atma* itself is the Guru for *Atma*.

Lawyer: Do you touch (handle) money?

Sri Bhagavan: No.

Lawyer: People say you are the *avatar* (incarnation) of Lord Subramanya. Is it true?

Sri Bhagavan: Yes, I am that, and all the rest I am too. (Laughter)

Lawyer: You said that you are in *Athi Varnasramam*. Is there anyone else now like that?

Sri Bhagavan: No, I alone am.

Lawyer: Were there anyone in ancient times?

Sri Bhagavan: Yes, there were.

Lawyer: Who were they?

Sri Bhagavan: Suka, Jada Bharata and others.

Lawyer: Why do people talk variedly about your *asramam*?

Sri Bhagavan: As is the disposition of one's mind, so is one's view, it seems.

#42

On 20th March 1938, a devotee asked Sri Bhagavan three questions. Sri Bhagavan graced us with answers to all three questions.

Devotee's Question #1: God has no desires. So then, why did he create everything?

Sri Bhagavan: Only if there is any question that is apart from God, does this question have any validity. What question can be there then? First, who asks this question? Does this question exist in sleep? Who asked you to think "I am different and God is different?" Only if we know our own worth can we even know about God, correct? In sleep are you aware that the body exists? First, you find out who you are. Later on, you can know about *Anma* and *Shiva*.

Devotee's Question #2: What is *Atma*?

Sri Bhagavan: That which always is indeed is *Atma*! In sleep, what do we perceive? Is it not common experience for all that we are not aware of anything? Only on waking, does the world appear. To whom does it appear and vanish? Look at that. That which is always, is the Self. After knowing that, let us worry about the connection between *Atma* and the *jiva*.

What happens to the *Atma* after death? — let us contemplate that after death! First, enquire about sleep. Is *Atma* different (from us)? Who is the one who wants to know about it? **If the *buddhi* (mind) which says “I am different and *Atma* is different” disappears, that alone is enough.**

If one holds on to a single thought or chant a *Nama Japa* (a repeated chanting of the Lord’s name), other thoughts will leave on their own.

We should first know what birth is. First the “I” thought arises. This is *jananam* (birth). Only after this does the world arise. If we surrender to *Iswara* (God), He says, “I will take care of everything!” Without doing this, man thinks he is doing everything.

Devotee’s Question #3: **What is the fate of the one who does not know the Self?**

Sri Bhagavan: **Why bother about others? Whatever comes, will go. Whatever is, exists always. Even though you know the one which is existing always, why do you concern yourself with the thoughts that arise continuously?**

Forgetting the screen, if one believes the changing images on it to be true, what to do? Is everything seen through our eyes true? Is it not right that one should first examine all these, and only then worry about whether what was stated in the *Puranas* (epics) is true or not? Nammazvar has sung, “*I am*

indeed Thou, indeed my belongings are Thou.” If you see “Who am I” what exists is only You (Self).

#43

Once Sri Bhagavan said: The real Guru will not prescribe any *sadhana* to a disciple to attain *mukti* (liberation) because *mukti* is our real nature. Other than that, anything new is not real. Whatever comes will go one day. That which comes and goes cannot be eternal. The Self always exists; it is the experience for all; it is that which everyone loves the most. Therefore, not letting go of the Self is the highest *sadhana*. In the end, there is neither *sadhana* nor what is achieved by *sadhana*. That which exists always is only one. Instead of that, if a Guru instructs a disciple that only by doing a *sadhana* he will attain *mukti*, then there is no greater *Yama* (God of death) than him.

#44

When Sri Bhagavan used to stay up on the mountain, Sri Kavyakanta Sastrigal said, “My opinion is that for a person to live in this world, three Rupees per month is enough.” He then requested Sri Bhagavan’s opinion on this matter.

Immediately Sri Bhagavan said, “If a person has a resolve that at any point of time, in order to live, he desires nothing whatsoever, then he can live in happiness.”

#45

Sometimes when devotees ask Sri Bhagavan about the greatness of this Tiruvannamalai, Sri Bhagavan would sit without the slightest movement. That

indeed is the answer. Once we asked him to tell us about the speciality of this mountain. This is what Sri Bhagavan told us, on March 18th, 1938:

“People following various modes of worship have talked about the speciality of this mountain in many different ways. In the *Puranas* (ancient legends) it is mentioned that this *Arunachalam* (name of the hill) resembles a cave inside and that there are many *siddhas* (those who have attained heights in their practice) and those who are steeped in penance residing inside. **Guru Namasivayar has sung the greatness of this mountain as “Annamalai is the mountain which welcomes sages who do *tapas* (penance).”** At Annamalai, when the Divine Mother was doing *tapas*, the demon Makitasurar came to her and said, “Marry me. What happiness did you attain doing penance?” When he tried to harass her thus, the Divine Mother instantly changed her form to Durga (one of the principal Hindu deities also known as Shakti or Devi). Fearing her, Makitasuran retreated. He then contemplated returning with his army to fight Durga. The Divine Mother learnt about this, and through Suraguru *muni* (Sage), she taught the Hithopadesa to Makitasuran.”

Since this Hithopadesa was in Sanskrit, I requested Sri Bhagavan to render it in Tamil. Hearing my request, Sri Bhagavan, the embodiment of compassion, graced us with the following verse:

*Forever to those who do not slip from the virtuous path and devotion,
Their refuge is Arunachalam only.*

*The evil-minded who harbour evil for others will perish
Being afflicted by many harmful diseases.*

The power of evil will lose its potency here.

*So do not perish falling in the fire of the anger of Arunachala whose form is
Fire itself.*

Sri Bhagavan then said, “Who can talk about the greatness of this mountain Arunachala?”

#46

A devotee told Sri Bhagavan, “Alas! I don’t know where the Self is.” Sri Bhagavan answered by giving an *upadesa* (spiritual instruction), ‘Stay where the ‘I’ exists!’

The next day the same devotee asked, “After returning to my place, should I continue to do work or not? Alas! I do not know.”

Sri Bhagavan responded: Eating, bathing, attending to nature’s call, talking, thinking and performing various actions related to the body — are these not work? Does doing a specific task alone constitute work? To be still is to do work unceasingly. To be in silence is to speak unceasingly.

#47

On the night of March 10th, 1938, I asked Sri Bhagavan about the mysteries of *siddhas*.

Sri Bhagavan’s reply: Practising *siddhis* (various physical and mental accomplishments) all merely strengthen the ego further. The great *siddhi* (accomplishment) is indeed to not see anything other than Self. For a perfect *Jnani*, all *siddhis* are ready to serve him at his command. “*With diligence, focusing on and abiding in the Self is siddhi. All other siddhis are akin to those appearing in a dream alone.*” Thus, he explained the verse from Ulladu Narpadu - 35.

#48

One morning, a devotee asked Sri Bhagavan: Is it true that God exists? I am not sure.

Sri Bhagavan replied, “Know whether it is true or false that you exist. Then we can see whether God exists or not. It looks like God himself has to jump in front of you from above in a huge form saying, “I am indeed God, what boon do you want?” Only then faith in God will arise in you, it seems.”

Hearing Sri Bhagavan’s response, all laughed.

#49

Once after supper, an old lady asked Sri Bhagavan: What is the way to keep my mind steady?

Sri Bhagavan graciously answered: It is enough to always contemplate on one thing. When the mind steps out again, if you bring it back to that single thought, in due course of time the mind will remain under our control.

#50

A *Marvadi* (an ethnic group from the Rajasthan region) devotee asked Sri Bhagavan: I want to know myself. Sri Bhagavan should please prescribe a method for it.

Sri Bhagavan answered with a smile: Do you accept that you have two I’s?

Devotee: That is what I don’t know. **What does one do to control the mind?**

Sri Bhagavan: It is enough to observe from where the mind rises.

#51

Once a scholar from Kerala asked Bhagavan, “Swami, I wish to tread the path of *dharma* (the right way of living) but it is not possible for me. *Poorva samskaras* (residue of past actions) are blocking me. When will they disappear?”

Bhagavan answered forcefully and tirelessly, like the flow of gushing waters from an ocean, with his typical “Who am I” enquiry, for all questions. As we listened, even we felt as though *Jnana* is so simple.

Scholar: While meditating, sleep overpowers me, I am unable to avoid it. What should I do?

Sri Bhagavan: If I say “I woke up,” then it means “I slept.” When wakefulness occurs, we should sleep and when sleep occurs, we should be awake. That is the state of *jagrat-sushupti* (*jagrat* is the waking state, and *sushupti* is the deep sleep state).

Scholar: It is not possible for me, alas!

Sri Bhagavan: The thought that it is not possible is the stumbling block.

Scholar: When this thought takes us over, what does one do?

Sri Bhagavan: This thought is not taking us over. It is by holding on to us, that the thought survives.

Scholar: If so, how does one control the mind?

Sri Bhagavan: Controlling the mind implies that there is another mind that is needed to control it. **Just as a person who tries to measure his own shadow is incapable of doing so, similar is the futility in trying to control one’s**

mind. While asleep, how were we? The same Self we are even now. Ignoring that, and to think that we are this specific body, is the first mistake. Just like on a canvas, there are many forms painted, but by seeing just one form one doesn't conclude "this form is indeed the entire canvas." On a cinema screen, so many forms appear and disappear, but the screen itself remains still. Similarly, even though so many thoughts rise and fall, the Self remains still.

Scholar: Alas! The *ajnana* (ignorance) needs to go!

Sri Bhagavan: It is enough to observe to whom this *ajnana* needs to go.

#52

When asked about how difficulties arise for a good person, Sri Bhagavan answered: It is for good that *bhaktas* (devotees) undergo difficulties. A launderer beats clothes heavily against the washing stone but only with the intent of cleaning them. In the same way, **to purify the bhakta's mind, He creates so many difficulties for him. If one is patient, happiness is sure to follow.**

#53

One night a devotee requested permission from Sri Bhagavan thus: Swami, I intend to leave my town and go to the forest to perform *tapas*. I have decided to go with Sri Bhagavan's permission.

Sri Bhagavan: One can leave his town but cannot leave his Self. If the town is apart from his Self, he can leave it. Abiding in his Self alone, is like being in the forest. Leaving his Self and going to the forest is no different from staying in his town.

Sri Bhagavan continued narrating his own experiences in a humorous vein: When I was staying in Virupaksha cave, many people used to visit me, bringing various *tiffin* (snacks) varieties. In the afternoon, they would serve me heavy meals with *vadai* and *payasam* (south Indian delicacies) and would force me to eat. So one day, deciding, “To hell with all this stuff! Let me take to *upavasa* (fasting) today,” I walked through the forest on the southwest side of the hill without anyone’s knowledge. In the middle of the forest, just behind me, there appeared seven ladies each with a sack on her head. On seeing me they spoke among themselves “Hey, the person walking in front of us is our Swami!”, and running towards me, a lady said, “Swami, please sit down, have some *tiffin*.” Another said, “Here, take some *idlis*” (soft steamed cake made of fermented rice and lentil batter). Competing among themselves one served me *murukku* (a fried snack) and another *dosa* (like a crepe), and so on.

After eating, I thought to myself (sarcastically), “Ah, what a good *upavasa* (fast) today!” I began to walk away from the ladies, but I heard them say loudly, “Swami, you should be getting ready for the midday meal. We will not let you go!” Saying so, they walked into the forest by the side of the hill.

Not wanting to get caught by them again, I walked slowly for some distance and sat in the shade of a tree. It was around noon. Once again, those ladies came straight to where I was sitting. As soon as they arrived, they insisted with urgency, “Swami, please come, show us a place where there is water so we can all eat.”

Wondering, “What is this! Good *upavasa* (fast) indeed,” I took them to the *Sona Theertham* of the forest. The ladies asked me to sit down. After I sat down, they laid down a banana leaf (in a traditional style food is eaten on the leaf) and began to compete with each other in serving me varieties of delicious food including rice, *curry*, *sambar*, *rasam*, *vadai*, and *payasam*.

I struggled. “My God! What I ate in the morning alone will last for 3 days. How am I to eat all this!” The ladies gave me *upadesa* (advice), saying, “Swami why are you staring at the food? Just eat it as though Unnamulai Devi (presiding Deity of Tiruvannamalai and consort of Lord Shiva) herself is serving you.”

After I finished eating, they said, “Swami, we have never been to this forest since we were born. Just today we came to pluck leaves.” Saying so, they instantly disappeared.

Thinking to myself, “Aha, these are divine beings in disguise,” I slowly went around the hill through the forest path to reach Vertrilai Mandapam so I could get some rest.

Meanwhile, a devotee named Sri Ramasami Iyer who had bought two mangoes - each as big as a pumpkin, made *rasam* (a south Indian dish) by cooking the mangoes in it. He had made some rice to go with it and came to Virupaksha cave looking for me. Since I was not there, he asked where I had gone to. They said, “Swami might have gone for the circumambulation of the mountain.” So, he thought, “Okay! Swami will come circling the hill from the right, so I should go left to reach him sooner and offer him this rice and the *rasam*.” Thus, he reached me as I was walking on the left side of the hill. My coming out coincided exactly with Ramasami Iyer’s arrival.

As soon as he reached me, he said, “O Swami, I went to Virupaksha cave looking for you and not finding you there, I came searching for you here.” He then begged me to eat the rice and the mango *rasam* that he had prepared. Even though I narrated the entire events of the day, he would not listen. He compelled me to eat the food he made. Thinking to myself, “Enough is enough! I have been punished well today!”, I ate a little bit of the food. Barely even able to walk, somehow I reached Virupaksha cave.

Sri Annamalai Swami wrote down Bhagavan's detailed narration

Bhagavan then began narrating another incident that occurred earlier: One day the three of us - me, Palaniswami, and another devotee were walking south of the hills on the other side of the stream. An old lady was sitting atop a tree, breaking dry twigs for firewood. Wondering who would be cutting firewood at such a height, I looked up at her. Immediately the old lady turned towards me and with both her arms stretched wide, gave me some stinging *upadesa* (advice), "Hey, may you be put on a *padai* (The wooden platform on which dead bodies are carried to the crematorium!) Instead of staying put in your place, abiding in silence as Siva, why the hell are you wandering here and there?"

Thinking, "Mother, what you say is very true. What I am doing is wrong. It is wrong, I'm sorry," I turned towards the old lady. She had disappeared too. Deciding, "Oh, she is also a divine being in disguise indeed", we returned after going around the forest.

#54

Sri Bhagavan: This is the sign that the devil called ego, has vanished from a person. A person went to a great *Jnani* and said, "Since people call you a *Jnani*, tell me all that you know."

The *Jnani* replied, "I know that I know nothing."

#55

For some time, Sri Bhagavan was suffering from piles. It was not known to anyone. Some devotees, seeing that it caused severe pain at times, prepared a

good medicine for it and gave it to Madhava Swami saying, “Give this to Sri Bhagavan in the morning and evening.”

Madhava Swami requested Sri Bhagavan to consume the medicine. In a childlike angry tone, Sri Bhagavan looked away from the medicine and said “Just for my sake you need not prepare the medicine or bring it to me. Taking medicine only aggravates the disease more than anything else. Let the donkey go the way it came. Let me endure it and be done with it. You need not recommend anything for this.”

The next day as well, devotees beseeched Sri Bhagavan to take the medicine. Sri Bhagavan, staying true to his principle of negating both likes and dislikes, took a little bit of the medicine, asked them to divide what was left, and give it to those who wished to have it. Thus, the devotees took the medicine too.

#56

One day Sri Bhagavan told me: Write down the contents of the small book *Ellam Ondre* (All is One) in your notebook.

Me: Since I have a lot of work to do, I don’t have time to write it down. If someone can write it down for me that would be good.

Sri Bhagavan: Oho! *Moksha* is not bought at a price! I said so because if you write it yourself, it will make a strong impression in your mind. In other words, writing it once is equivalent to reading it ten times. Write a little each day. Let it take a month to complete.

I started copying the content of the book *Ellam Ondre* into my notebook. The book had six small chapters. Gracious Bhagavan wrote the heading of each chapter in his own hand. Little by little, I completed the work. In the end, Sri

Bhagavan himself checked what I had written and corrected the mistakes as well.

#57

One night Chadwick asked Sri Bhagavan: It is said that only when the mind arises does the world come into being. My mind subsides in sleep and in *dhyana* (meditation) where the world does not appear to me. But does the external world really disappear? Looking at the experience of others, is it not true that the world still exists? Isn't the same world eternally present since it is created by some *samashti* (macrocosm) mind? That being so, how is it right to assert that the world does not exist and that it is only a dream?

Sri Bhagavan: The world never says that it has been created by a *samashti* mind. Does it not appear only in our tiny little minds? If our mind (ego) is destroyed, no world exists.

To illustrate this truth, he narrated a small story:

“Once upon a time, there was a person. His father had died 30 years back. One day he dreamt as if his father was alive, that he was a young boy with 4 brothers, that his father had earned a lot of wealth divided that, and bequeathed it to him and his 4 brothers but his brothers not content with the portion given by his father and were coming to fight with him. Further, quarreling with him, they well-nigh thrashed him and after that thrashing, he received in the dream, out of sheer fear he woke up. But after waking up he was totally relieved thinking ‘Oh, it is only a dream, not reality.’ Of course, for him, there was no father now nor brothers and the one who exists is just himself. Realizing this, he became happy. So also, if we observe our Self, then there is no world. Negating the Self, if we only perceive the world then we suffer.” Sri Bhagavan graciously gave *upadesa*.

Sri Annamalai Swami with Major Chadwick

#58

July 2nd, 1938.

One day when Sri Bhagavan was taking a stroll by the side of the hill, a scavenger who cleans the *ashramam* on seeing Sri Bhagavan, stopped his work and prostrated to him.

Sri Bhagavan gave him this *upadesa*: If you perform your work correctly that itself is a great *namaskar* (prostration). If each one without relinquishing his *svadharma* (prescribed duties in life) performs it, it is easier to attain the absolute Truth.

Sri Annamalai Swami's notes in his diary from July 2nd, 1938

#59

On the night of 23rd July 1938, a devotee asked Sri Bhagavan: It is said in the *Shastras* that one should focus his attention at the centre of the eyebrows. Is that correct?

Sri Bhagavan: **The awareness that “I am” is evident for everyone. Discarding that, what happiness is there in seeing whichever God? There is nothing more foolish than believing that God exists only at the centre of the eyebrows etc.** The suggestion that one needs to focus on the places you mentioned is one kind of crude method to concentrate the mind without letting it wander around and nothing more. Much easier than this, is to enquire “Who

am I.” All methods of religion are only good for certain stages of maturity. The *maya* which is a result of the mind has to be destroyed only by the mind.

Devotee: When it comes to matters of food, how should an *Atma Sadhaka* (a spiritual practitioner) conduct himself?

Sri Bhagavan: Better than all rules, the regimen of moderate *sattvic* (pure) food alone is good.

Devotee: **So many *asanas* (yogic postures) are prescribed in the books - which is the best of these? Which one needs to be performed?**

Sri Bhagavan: ***Nitidhyasanam* (abiding in the Self) alone is good. It is enough to do just this.**

#60

The gracious *upadesa* of Sri Bhagavan on July 29th, 1938: Each *jiva* perceives a different world, but a *Jnani* does not perceive anything apart from the Self. This alone is the real state.

#61

August 4th, 1938.

During the night *satsang* a person asked Sri Bhagavan, “Swami, as soon as I heard your name, I felt a tremendous eagerness to meet you, and here I am. How did I feel such an eagerness suddenly?”

Sri Bhagavan: Just as how this body came to us, just like that.

Devotee: **What is the purpose of one’s life?**

Sri Bhagavan graciously answered: That a person even thinks that he should understand the true principle of life and conduct himself accordingly, is itself the result of austerities performed in his past lives. Those who are unmindful of this are wasting their time.

#62

One day a devotee asked: Bhagavan knows when I will attain *Jnana*. So Bhagavan should please reveal that to me.

Sri Bhagavan: If I am considered to be Bhagavan, then there is the one alone that exists. So, to whom will I tell?

On the other hand, if you consider me to be just a man, then however much you know, only that much I know too. (Laughter)

#63

On the morning of September 28th, 1938 when Sri Bhagavan was taking his bath, Madhava Swami and I were there. After Sri Bhagavan had finished his bath, Madhava Swami humorously asked Sri Bhagavan about *ganja* (cannabis drug).

Sri Bhagavan: It is a very bad habit. **Ah! How to describe the joy of those who have consumed it? Then, embracing me tightly with both his hands, Bhagavan said, ‘They will shout Ananda! Ananda!’** Saying so, he left the bathroom and went out laughing loudly. **With the experience that occurred that time, from that day onwards my mind, my body, and my work changed completely.**

On October 6th, 1938, I left the ashram and arrived at Pelakothu.

#64

A person asked Sri Bhagavan about the form and formless aspects of the mind.

Sri Bhagavan answered: Pure mind is also called *manokasam* (a mind as clear as space). Waking up from sleep, we all experience *jnepthy* (an awareness that occurs before the body-idea takes hold). This is the formless aspect of the mind. Then thoughts like “I am this body, there is the world,” etc. come in. This indeed is the form of the mind. For example, in a cinema, only after the light is turned on, do forms appear on the screen. In the same way, this *Atma Jyothi* alone exists and in its presence, everything shines.

#65

On the night of 22nd October 1938, a devotee asked Sri Bhagavan: O Bhagavan, I have seen so much of *Vedas* and *Shastras* but alas! I have not attained *Atma Jnana* (knowing the Self). Why?

Sri Bhagavan: Only if *Atma Jnana* is in the *Shastras* can it be attained from them. **If one observes the *Shastras*, only *Shastra Jnana* (knowing the *Shastras*) can happen. If one perceives *Atma*, then *Atma Jnana* shines.**

Devotee’s second question: How to perceive the *Atma*?

Sri Bhagavan: **Each one of us says “I am.” How did we come to know that? By looking at ourselves in a mirror?** If *Atma* were to be perceived, you need two *Atmas*. Will you accept that there are two I’s for you?

Devotee: No.

Sri Bhagavan: All that exists is only one. That being so, how can one perceive another? Everybody exists as *Atma* alone everywhere, but that is not understood. It is a pity, what to do! If one drops the idea “I am the body” then what remains is *Atma* alone.

Devotee: What am I to do now? What is my duty?

Sri Bhagavan: You do not have to do anything now. See who you are. Afterward, if there is any duty, you can do it.

#66

I felt Bhagavan’s presence in the forest:

On the evening of October 26th, 1938 at 4 PM, I went on a stroll and reached the forest south of the hill. Instead of taking the forest paths, I climbed up the hill directly in an area that is generally not frequented by people. On the way, these thorns shaped like hooks kept getting stuck to my *dhoti* (a white cloth worn by men from the waist to the feet). Each time it took me two minutes to get the thorns out. I felt quite distressed and thought, “Why the hell did I come to this place? Alas! If I had just gone to Sri Bhagavan’s hall, it would have been much better. Why did I come here?”

Then after walking ten paces, I saw a piece of folded paper lying under a thorny bush. Wondering what might be written in that paper, I bent and picked it up to have a look. I saw the very personification of grace, Sri Bhagavan’s picture, and ten *Ramana Stuti* songs (songs in praise of Ramana) called Thirudhasangam, written by a devotee of Bhagavan named Ramachandra Iyer. I read all the 10 *venbas* (poetry). Ah! What a surprise! As though in response to my worry that I was not able to go to Sri Bhagavan’s hall, I felt that Sri Bhagavan himself was telling me, “Here! I am present everywhere, I have no boundaries such as name, town, or country.” I was absolutely elated.

These *venbas* (Thirudhasangam) were released 20 years ago when Sri Bhagavan was living on the hill. I saw it today for the first time. And only now I understood clearly that Ramana alone pervades all, *Sarvam Ramanamayam Jagat* (the whole world is Ramana). K.V. Ramachandra Iyer who composed these verses and printed them was a great devotee of Bhagavan and was hailed as a classical Tamil poet.

I stuck that printed photo of Bhagavan and the 10 Thirudhasangam songs in my diary.

Sri Annamalai Swami's notes on how he found the Thirudhasangam songs. Above the picture of Bhagavan, he wrote 'Sarvam Ramanamayam Jagat'

Swami stuck the printed Thirudhasangam songs he found, onto his diary.

Thirudhasangam Songs

1. Sri Bhagavan's Name

Poet: O Glorious Parrot! Please tell, what is the holy name of our Master, the one who gracefully resides at Tiruvannamalai?

Parrot: For He who wears many garlands and plays in the infinite space, for that Vedanayakan Bhagavan Ramana (Lord of the Vedas) all given names are His names only.

2. Sri Bhagavan's Country

Poet: O Parrot from the garden enriched with beautiful flowers and climbers! Please tell me which is the noble country where the golden king of Annamalai shines?

Parrot: For He who has conquered the kingdom of divine Grace, for that pure one, can there ever be a country greater than that? Tell me!

3. Sri Bhagavan's Place

Poet: O Parrot with a mouth rich in honey! Please tell me which is the place our divine Lord of Thiruchuzi belongs to?

Parrot: The Gods from the sky and Humans on this earth whose attention (*chittam*) is rooted in the cave of consciousness, there is the place where He belongs.

4. Sri Bhagavan's River

Poet: O Parrot with a lovely red beak and beautiful golden wings! Please tell me which is the river of our Lord and Guru of Arunachala.

Parrot: The gushing river of supreme bliss which floods its banks to cleanse the deadly impurities of *karma*, egotism, and *maya* (illusion, delusion) is His river indeed!

5. Sri Bhagavan's Mountain

Poet: O young Parrot of greenish hue! Please tell me which is the mountain that our famous Guru of Annamalai praises the most?

Parrot: For our great God who revels in the highest state of attainment extolled by the scriptures, *upasantham* (deep silence) is the mountain He likes and praises the most.

6. Sri Bhagavan's Horse

Poet: O Parrot of beauty and elegance who is inseparable from me! Which is the horse that is worthy of our Lord and Guru of Annamalai?

Parrot: Those *Devas* (Gods) who have severed their attachment over the body and other *upadhis* (adjuncts) which lead to suffering, who bow down to the great Lord (Ramana), for Him, Space indeed is the horse.

7. Sri Bhagavan's Weapon

Poet: O Parrot who lives in the garden rich with flower-creepers! Please tell me, the weapon our *Satguru* uses to take the life of his enemies?

Parrot: *Jnana Shakti* (Power of *Jnana*) is the weapon that our *Satguru* uses to destroy the most harmful enemy on earth, which is the bondage of *karma*.

8. Sri Bhagavan's Musical Drum

Poet: O great young Parrot! Please tell me what type of drum is played for our sweet Master of Annamalai?

Parrot: The crescendo of Supreme bliss due to which the body and mind of the virtuous one dissolve is the drum of divine music.

9. Sri Bhagavan's flower garlands

Poet: O Parrot of blemishless speech! What is the garland that our Master, who resides in the hearts of devotees, loves the most?

Parrot: On this earth, the garland of poems composed by the four great types of poets like Asukavi, whose words bring tears of love, is the garland He loves the most.

10. Sri Bhagavan's Flag

Poet: O Parrot of sweet words without malice! Tell me, which is the flag of the stainless one living in beautiful Tiruvannamalai?

Parrot: He who does not argue with anyone, that master of compassion who abides in Himself without the notion of 'other,' the flag He chose is Silence.

#67

October 30th, 1938.

At night, Sri Bhagavan began narrating certain past incidents that occurred while he was living on the hill:

“When I was young, I was sitting on a rock on the hill. One day a boy came to me. He was around 8 years old. Seeing me he asked with great pity, “Swami, why are you living like this all alone and without any clothes?” I gave him an answer that he could relate to: The elders in my home were angry with me, so I left them and came here. The boy asked, “Swami, what will you do for food?” I replied, “If somebody gives me food I eat it, otherwise no.” The boy answered with great sympathy, “Aiiyyo! Please come with me. I will talk to my boss and get you a job.

For a few days, if you work for food, he will put you on a salary later.” I stayed silent listening to all this.

Another day while I was sitting on the *thinnai* (a raised platform) at Virupaksha cave, a small boy came up to me and kept staring at me. Then he wept profusely, sobbing again and again. Palaniswami, who was inside the cave came out and asked him, “Why are you crying?”

“I feel great pity when I see him,” said the boy and began sobbing again.” Sri Bhagavan imitated the crying boy as he narrated this incident.

#68

19th September 1938.

A devotee asked Sri Bhagavan: If one wants to totally surrender to God, how should one do it?

Sri Bhagavan: Just like how one offers jaggery taking a piece from the very *jaggery-Ganapathy* Himself! (*Background: Puja to Lord Ganapathy is sometimes done by making a small Ganapathy idol out of jaggery. In any puja it is a tradition to offer the Lord, a Naivedyam - food offering. But since the idol itself is made of food - jaggery, the devotee pinches a piece of jaggery from the very idol and offers it to the idol of the Lord as Naivedyam.*)

“Body and mind are the property of God. To offer them to God alone is the only true surrender. Then the individuality having gone, he becomes one with God Himself, without duality.”

#69

Once while looking at a small baby, Sri Bhagavan said, “If one’s mind becomes so pure like this child, then he can attain *Brahmananda* (the bliss of *Brahman*).”

I asked Sri Bhagavan, “What is the difference between the child and a *Jnani*?”

Sri Bhagavan replied, “The child, because of *ajnana* is ignorant. The *Jnani*, because of *Jnana* is a child of wisdom.”

#70

20th September 1938.

Sri Bhagavan graciously mentioned: **Whosoever at all times anticipates God's deeds, knowing that nothing happens by him, and loves God as the one who takes care of everything, God makes him follow the path of Truth every single minute.**

#71

On September 22nd, 1938, a devotee from Andhra Pradesh asked Sri Bhagavan: Is the universe which appears so varied, false? Or is it real indeed?

Sri Bhagavan: False and real simply depend on how we perceive anything. If we see all as *Brahmam*, then there is no universe.

Question: Then why does the universe appear?

Sri Bhagavan: To whom does it appear? The universe does not say "I exist." Is there any authority that validates the appearance of the universe as true? To whom does it appear?

Devotee: To me.

Sri Bhagavan: Who are you? Know who you are. Then, if the universe exists, tell me.

Devotee: Swami! Can I assume I am *Brahman*?

Sri Bhagavan: **You will only get beatings if you assume that you are *Brahman*. Why? Everything is *Brahman* indeed. Why should you assume it?** Only if you think that you are the body, you need to assume that you are *Brahman*.

Devotee: Troubles seem endless, as I have a wife and children!

Sri Bhagavan: External *samsara* will not affect you. One only needs to give up the internal *samsara*.

Devotee: This attitude stays only for five minutes, then it changes.

Sri Bhagavan (remaining silent for some time): All these kinds of thoughts should end.

Sri Bhagavan was silent after answering.

#72

September 23rd, 1938.

Sri Bhagavan was extolling the greatness of Arunachala:

“This hill is a *Tejolingam* (a glowing symbol of Lord Shiva). Nowhere, not in any world, is there a *linga* like this. Though the other *lingas* are the creation of *Iswara* (God), they cannot be equal to this. This hill is the Self itself, shining as the Self. This place has another name, Nava Dwara Puri. That is, there are nine entrances to Tiruvannamalai available always. Purana says that Arunagiri Yogi in the form of a *siddha* is ever-present under a banyan tree on the north side of the hill.”

#73

Once some people came from the South for Sri Bhagavan’s *darshan*. A small boy came along with them. He was about 5 years old. He prostrated to Sri Bhagavan along with others, then went near Bhagavan and looked at him with love.

Sri Bhagavan, who is ever a devotee's devotee, placing his left hand on the boy's head asked, "*Appa*, what do you want?"

The boy answered emphatically, "I want nothing at all."

Sri Bhagavan said, "Oh, you belong to us! Everything will come to him if one lives wanting nothing." Continuing further, he narrated an example from an old incident in his life:

"When I was at the Pachayyamma temple, my cloth tore. I never ask anybody for anything. So, to stitch the torn loincloth, I took a cactus thorn, split it at its bottom, took a thread from the same loincloth, and squeezing it between the split edges, stitched the torn cloth and used it for two months. My hand towel used to be like a net made of thread. Once a person who tended cows, seeing that towel, made fun of me saying, "Swami, the Governor asked for this towel!" Washing it and drying it without anybody's knowledge, I used to keep it rolled up within my palm. Those who were with me, somehow noticing this, bought 3 sets of new loincloths and new hand towels. They hid the torn towel from me after giving me the new ones, saying I should use the new ones.

If you stay wanting nothing, everything comes as if it was just meant for you! That is why one should avoid both likes and dislikes."

#74

On 2nd January 1939, a devotee asked Sri Bhagavan: It has been said in the *Shastras* that there are different kinds of *ananda*. Are there so many kinds?

Sri Bhagavan: *Ananda* is only one. That itself is God. ***Ananda* is our true nature.** Since we experience that *ananda* outwardly through various sense pleasures, it has resulted in so many names.

No matter how many pleasures you enjoy through the mind, that many millions of troubles will also have to be endured. But for a *Jnani* that is not the case. The entire *ananda* that all those in the world experience - the *Jnani* forever experiences that as his *Brahmananda* (the bliss of *Brahman*).

Brahmananda is like an ocean. External pleasures are like the wave, froth, bubbles, and water drops. In sleep, *ananda* is common for all. All living beings, from the very poor to great kings - all experience *ananda* equally in sleep.

#75

November 11th, 1938.

In the evening when I was walking along the hill with Sri Bhagavan, I asked him: When I meditate, what should I do to avoid falling asleep?

Sri Bhagavan: **Those who meditate should not do too much work and should not load the stomach with heavy food. If the stomach is always kept empty, one can ascend.** That is, one should neither tighten the strings of the *veena* (a stringed instrument) too much nor loosen them too much. The body should be maintained like that; sleep also like that.

There is one kind of arrangement that divides the night into 3 parts where one needs to sleep during one part. That is, going to bed at 10 in the night, one should give up sleep at 2 in the morning. One should not sleep in the afternoon. There is another kind too. One should get up whenever one wakes up, should sleep whenever he feels sleepy but should not think, “I slept, I woke up.”

Further, he recited a verse for us from *Devikalothram* and graciously explained its meaning:

*On account of sleep and countless thoughts daily,
Mind indeed gets much degenerated
Make this mind realize through effort
And keep it abiding in Being and not becoming.
Keep abiding on and on.*

#76

November 12th, 1938.

When Sri Bhagavan took a stroll in the evening, I accompanied him. This is the question I asked him: O Bhagavan! While meditating, the *prana* (life force) is in a state of *kumbaka* (suspension of breath) in my stomach. Is it good?

Sri Bhagavan: It is good.

I (feeling happy): What will happen if I keep on meditating?

Sri Bhagavan: *Samadhi* will be attained.

I: Does *samadhi* mean one will not be aware of anything?

Sri Bhagavan: No, *dhyana* occurs without our effort. That is *samadhi*.

I: What is *sahaja samadhi*?

Sri Bhagavan: *Dhyana* will always continue without interruption. In that state, even the thought that “I am meditating” or “I am not meditating” will not arise.

I: Sometimes I am not aware of anything at all, is it good?

Sri Bhagavan: It is good for those who meditate, to meditate with self-awareness in the beginning.

Sri Annamalai Swami's notes describing the above conversation

#77

On January 3rd, 1939 during *satsang* at night, a devotee asked Sri Bhagavan: I forget to meditate because I have too much work to do. How will I advance if I forget like this?

Sri Bhagavan: Does not matter. *Jnana* does not dawn in just a day. The seeds of past actions will vanish only over time. Today we think we have forgotten to meditate once in 4 hours. The next day, once in 3 1/2 hours that awareness will occur. The next day once in 3 hours. Like this day by day when one meditates, he gets enthusiasm. Why should one think "I have not meditated at all; I have been doing work only?" If one stops thinking "I have done; I have not done," all activities will culminate as *dhyana*. Then one cannot give up *dhyana*. **Even if we give it up, it will not give us up. That indeed is *sahaja samadhi*.**

Devotee: Would I have done meritorious deeds in past births?

Sri Bhagavan: Aha! Without it will such thoughts arise?

#78

On the morning of January 18th, 1939 when Sri Bhagavan walked up the hill, I thought let me also go with him and went along. There was a small plaster

applied on Sri Bhagavan's finger on his left hand and the toe on his right foot. On seeing it, I asked Sri Bhagavan, "What, did the knife hit you?"

Sri Bhagavan said with laughter, "No sir, my hand hit the knife, my leg hit the stone." I too could not control my laughter.

#79

Some time ago (thinking Sri Bhagavan would suggest some medicine) I asked Sri Bhagavan: I often get stomach pain. What should I do about this?

Sri Bhagavan: What to do? **This body itself is a great disease. To get rid of this disease one should remain still (*Summa Iru: abide in the Self.*)** All other diseases will then vanish. You are telling me! Who will I tell about the diseases I have? (referring to the body).

#80

Once I had asked Sri Bhagavan: Some people who have been closely associated with Sri Bhagavan and even served him, why should they fall into evil ways?

Sri Bhagavan: Did not Jayan and Vijayan who were serving Sri Vishnu Bhagavan at Vaikunta just due to their ego turn into *Rakshasas* (demons) like Hiranya and Hiranyaksha?

#81

On January 26th, 1939 some devotees asked Sri Bhagavan: Why does a *Jnani* bless only a few, while he is angry with some others? Why doesn't the *Jnani* reform whoever comes to him? What is the responsibility of a *Jnani*?

Sri Bhagavan answered pointedly and with love: **It all depends on the maturity and the karmas of the sadhakas.** As an example of this, he recited the following songs from Kaivalya Navaneetham:

Chapter 2, Verse 50

Master: My son, jivas are unlimited in number, capacity, and kind, and their actions also are similarly unlimited. In three sections the beneficent Vedas prescribe according to the maturity of seekers, with preliminary views succeeded by conclusions, like flowers by fruits.

Chapter 2, Verse 59

Those fools head for downfall, who in their ignorance attribute to God the six evils, which are of their own making, but the wise who recognise the same evils to be of their own making and not God's, will attain the spotless abode of freedom.

Chapter 2, Verse 60

Disciple: How is it that God, who is impartial, advances a few and degrades others?

Master: He is like the father who encourages his sons who are in the right way, and frowns on the other sons who are in the wrong way. Know it to be mercy to punish the erring and direct them to be righteous.

Chapter 2, Verse 61

The celestial tree, fire, and water protect those who seek them, by fulfilling their desires, keeping them warm, and quenching their thirst. So also, Iswara is kind to His devotees who seek him and not so to others who don't. Now think well and judge whose fault it is.

Chapter 2, Verse 35

Hear me further. The activities of the Jnani are solely for the benevolence of the world. He does not stand to lose or gain anything. Just as the Almighty, who bestows his Grace on all, is not affected by the merits or demerits resulting from creation and other actions.

#82

Sri Bhagavan said that the meaning of *Yajna* and *Yaga* is simply renunciation. Furthermore, when compared to all renunciations, the renunciation of the body indeed is freedom, he said.

#83

An English woman by the name of Lady Betmen was staying in the Ashram for few days along with some ladies who were her friends. On the night of January 1st, 1938, around 7:30 PM, she along with her group asked Sri Bhagavan: Sri Bhagavan also eats, he speaks, he takes medicine for his toothache, he does all these things just like us. Then what is the difference between us and Sri Bhagavan, we don't know.

Sri Bhagavan explained the difference between a *Jnani* and an *ajnani* (one who is not a *Jnani*) using some stories as examples:

1. "A small boy before going to sleep cried, "*Amma* (mother), I am hungry, please give me food." The mother said, "Oh, the rice is still being cooked, just be patient for a while." Before the rice was ready, the boy had slept. The mother woke him up and fed him saying "Here, take *dal* rice, *rasam* rice, and curd rice." The boy ate for half an hour and fell asleep. Everyone knew it but on waking up the next day he asked,

“*Amma!* Why didn’t you feed me dinner last night?” A *Jnani*’s actions are perhaps like that.”

2. “Like one who appears to be listening to a story, but his mind is completely elsewhere.”
3. “Like sleeping in a vehicle that is moving.”
4. “In a certain place, two men were lying down, both fast asleep. One of them dreamt that both men were running in a forest, wandering here and there, climbing uphill and struggling. The other man slept well without any dreams. Nevertheless, the one who dreamt, thinks that he (the other person who slept well) too underwent difficulties like him. Just like this are the states of a *Jnani* and an *ajnani*.”
5. “Swami Ramtheertha was doing *Japa*, (repetition of a mantra) ‘*Sivoham, Sivoham*’ (I am Shiva) sitting on the terrace of a house. Then an *ajnani* came up to him and told him, “Please jump down from the terrace first. After that, we can be sure if the words you are chanting are right or wrong.” Ramtheertha asked, “Where is down and where is up?”

That is to say, a *Jnani* perceives everything in the state of *Jnanam*, an *ajnani* perceives everything in the state of *ajnanam* (ignorance).”

6. “The *ajnani* is ever awake to the world and asleep to the Reality, while the *Jnani* is ever awake to the Reality and asleep to the world.”
7. “The *ajnani* is like the one who missing the screen, sees only the names and forms appearing on it, whereas the *Jnani* is like the one who perceives the screen which is the background for all names and forms.”

“This indeed is the difference between a *Jnani* and an *ajnani*”, Sri Bhagavan concluded. After listening keenly to his *upadesa*, the English ladies and other

devotees paid their respects to Sri Bhagavan. Then we all dispersed.

#84

On the evening of October 8th, 1938, when Sri Bhagavan was taking a stroll on the hill, I went along and asked for a boon, “Oh, Sri Bhagavan, I do not need anything else in the world, only grant me the boon that I should not get *dehatma buddhi*” (the identification of the Self with the body).

Sri Bhagavan nodding his consent said, “It is precisely for this that all the great ones struggled. You are also like them.”

#85

October 11th, 1938.

Sri Bhagavan’s younger sister Alamelu Ammal, taking pity on me, asked Chinnaswami and Sri Bhagavan, “Why did Annamalai Swami leave the *ashram* and go to Pelakothu?”

Sri Bhagavan answered graciously, “How do I know what the reason is? There is the One who can take care of all burdens. When I say, surrender everything to Him and be still (*Summa Iru*), who listens to me?”

Who can understand Sri Bhagavan’s play of *maya*? Only those who have deep devotion can understand something. Smt. Alamelu Ammal told me what Sri Bhagavan had said. After listening to Sri Bhagavan’s answer I thought, “It is to strengthen my mind, that Sri Bhagavan has sent a message today through Alamelu Ammal, that I should surrender all my worries about my body to Sri Bhagavan and I should remain still (abide in the Self, *Summa Iru*).” This

understanding gave me happiness and I wondered in awe about Sri Bhagavan's grace.

Three days after I came to Pelakothu, while cutting vegetables in the early morning, Sri Bhagavan like a *mayavi* (one who is behind everything but pretends as though he doesn't know) asked a devotee named Subramanyam, "Why did Annamalai Swami leave the Ashram?" Subramanyam replied, "He was just doing his work sincerely but Chinna Swami used to quarrel with him often. Not liking this, he left the ashram." I was told that on hearing this, Sri Bhagavan remained silent.

Having learnt about this from Subramanyam, I was amazed at Sri Bhagavan's play. Doesn't the donkey recognise its owner's ways? *(It was with Bhagavan's blessings that Sri Annamalai Swami left for Pelakothu. So, he wonders in amazement when the all-knowing Bhagavan asks people why Annamalai Swami left the ashram.)*

"He speaks according to the mentality of each listener, yet he does not become like them" — behold the words of wisdom! *(This is a saying by a Jnani. The meaning in this context is that even though Bhagavan talks with devotees according to their mindsets, he never becomes like them.)*

#86

On February 9th, 1939 a devotee asked Sri Bhagavan, "Because of the nature of my job, I am unable to stay in one place and I am required to travel a lot. What should I do?"

Immediately, Sri Bhagavan answered, "What is the surprise in this? One's life span itself is one's journey in this world." The devotee was satisfied with the answer.

#87

Madhava Swami had translated the book “*Who am I*” into Malayalam. On seeing it Sri Bhagavan said, “O Madhavan, keep the notebook in which you had translated the work “*Who am I*,” safely. Let us see when the time will come for it.”

I felt even to complete a small work, Bhagavan waits for the right time for it to happen perhaps.

#88

On February 28th, 1939 a Brahmin man about 40 years old and lame, asked Sri Bhagavan: O Bhagavan! I have gone through so much sorrow my entire life. Is it because of the sins I have committed in my past life? I also asked my mother if I was unhappy even when I was in her womb. She told me that at the time when I was in her womb, she had suffered a lot. How did so much sin and suffering come to me?

Sri Bhagavan: We should say, it is because of one’s past life. Suppose you contemplate how that past *karma* came about. Instead of reasoning that it happened because of the previous life, enquire as to whom this birth has occurred. If the body has taken birth, then let the body ask all these questions. You say that you are always experiencing sorrow. Only your thoughts say so. What exists always is happiness only. What comes and goes is indeed sorrow. Being the embodiment of bliss forever, to think one is in sorrow is indeed sorrow. **Whatever comes and goes anew is all just sorrow. Only that which exists always is happiness.**

A great monarch, despite having all kinds of wealth and so many attendants to accomplish whatever he wants to be done, yet experiences sorrow, only

because his state of mind is not good. Another person though struggling to get a morsel of food, because his mind is pure, is always happy. See who is the happy one in this.

#89

February 28th, 1939.

A person who was very devoted to Sri Bhagavan came from Tiruchi along with his son. Sri Bhagavan was seated in the hall. After prostrating to him, they sat down. Who knows the mental struggles of devotees better than Sri Bhagavan, who is Grace personified? Just seeing the boy, anyone would feel pity for him. At such a young age he looked so worried.

Sri Annamalai Swami's notes on February 28th, 1939

Sri Bhagavan asked the devotees: When and through what mode of transport did you come?

Devotee (folding his palms in veneration): We came this morning by the 8:30.

Sri Bhagavan (referring to the boy): How is Dattatreya?

Devotee: After having tried all kinds of medicines and mantras, we finally have come to Bhagavan as the sole refuge.

Sri Bhagavan said to the boy: Why should you worry like this having been named Dattatreya? You should be happy always. Instead of that, why are you disturbing the *ananda* (bliss) because of your mind?

Further, Sri Bhagavan narrated to the boy and other devotees the history and *upadesa* of Dattatreya, a great Sage who lived long ago.

Dattatreya used to wander in the forest without any clothes on him and would be always be seen in a blissful state. King Yadu on seeing him wondered, “What, he always seems happy! Whereas, though I have everything, I am always steeped in sorrow.” So, one day he went to Dattatreya and asked him, “Dear Sir, how do you always seem to be blissful?”

Dattatreya responded to King Yadu’s question at length:

“O, Rajah! I have twenty-four Gurus. I move about in the world as a liberated being because of the *Jnana* earned through those *acharyas*. Know who are those *acharyas*. After negating a few, they are earth, air, ether, water, fire, moon, sun, wild sparrow, python, ocean, moth, bee, elephant, honey collector, deer, fish, a damsel by name Pingala, child, small girl, archer, and a serpent.

I realized patience from the earth, omnipresence from the air, non-attachment from the ether, purity from water, holiness from fire, from the moon the realization that all changes are only for the body and not for Self, from Sun how a Yogi though perceiving worldly objects through senses, is never attached to them.

From wild sparrow I learnt that whosoever gets attached to a home, he, though practicing higher *sadhana* slips down.

From python, I learnt that whether food is available or not, one should accept both without worry and doership like a python.

Like the ocean, I learnt that I should be graceful, majestic, unfathomable by the minds of others, expansive and undisturbed.

When the moth falls into a lamp, it burns and dies. I learnt, so also the person falling into the fire of lust for women gets destroyed.

I learnt from the bee that one should seek just enough food for one's sustenance without desiring anything from others.

I learnt from the elephant that even though the male is all-powerful, it suffers pangs of distress when it becomes attached to the female elephant; that touching a woman or even going near her is akin to meeting *Yama* (Lord of Death).

Learnt from the honey collector that just as the honey bee works for several days collecting honey, only to lose it all in an instant, to the honey collector, similarly everything a person has worked hard for, can be taken away from him by someone instantaneously.

Just as the deer, attracted by the hunter's song gets trapped in his net, so also a *sadhu* (monk), when fascinated by worldly affairs is sure to be bound. So, I learnt from the deer, that a *sadhu* should not engage in worldly affairs.

Being unable to control its tongue, the fish gets attracted to the bait of a fishing rod and dies. So also, I learnt from that fish that a man who cannot control his tongue will suffer. One should be a master of one's tongue.

Once a *dasi* (immoral woman) called Pingalai, fully decorated, was waiting in the expectation that a paramour with money would come to her. She wandered here and there till late in the night. Since no one came, she felt pained, crest-fallen, became weak mentally and began to enquire into the cause for her sorrow. She learnt that happiness comes from *Paramatma* (Supreme Self) alone and not from the cheap pleasures attained from mean men and money. She became dispassionate. She attained the happiness born of wisdom by worshiping the one who is always by her side, the eternal one, the *Paramatma* (Supreme Self) indeed as her husband. I learnt from Pingalai that there is no happiness in worldliness and what is to be attained is only the bliss of the Self

I learnt from a child how one should remain in a state without honor or dishonor.

Further, I shall tell you a story about a girl. When her parents were not in town, she saw a group of people who came to arrange her marriage. She thought of serving them food and started to make rice, by pounding paddy to separate it from the husk. The bangles on her wrists made a lot of noise. Feeling shy, she removed all but two bangles and continued pounding. Still, she could hear the noise of the bangles. So, she removed one of them and put it on the other hand. Now there was no noise at all. So also, I learnt from the actions of this young girl that a *Yogi* should practice solitude.

From the archer, I learnt the principle that one should remain focused on his target.

Just as a serpent lives happily moving into a rat's hole, so also, I learnt the principle of not possessing a home for myself but rather be able to live comfortably no matter where.

There is a 25th Guru for me and that is my body. This body is the cause for my *Vairagya* (dispassion) and *Jnana* (enlightenment). **Dispassion comes from the knowledge that birth and death of the body invariably lead to sorrow.**

My state is equivalent to that of one who is the Self, who is unaware of anything else and has merged in supreme love with *Hari* (the Lord)."

In this manner, Dattatreya completed narrating to King Yadu the *Jnana* he realized from those twenty-five Gurus.

Sri Bhagavan shared the *upadesa* which was given by Sri Dattatreya in ancient times to the King and told the boy, "You are also Dattatreya, aren't you? At least for your namesake should you not be happy?"

On behalf of the boy, everyone received the *upadesa* about the twenty-five Gurus from Sri Bhagavan that day.

#90

March 29th, 1939.

Maurice Friedman asked Sri Bhagavan: When I meditate, I am not aware of anything. Is it *manolayam* (temporary stillness of thought) or *manonasam* (annihilation of ego)?

Sri Bhagavan: No question arises in *manolayam* and *manonasam*.

Friedman: What does *manonasam* mean?

Sri Bhagavan: I am not aware of anything, “I am aware of something”... Not having any doubtful thoughts like these, is *manonasam*.

#91

On April 2nd, 1939 two Congress workers asked Sri Bhagavan, “After attaining *Jnana* with your grace, can we teach the world?”

Sri Bhagavan: **Leave aside the idea of teaching the world. First, know yourself. Then, if at all there is a world or there are people, you may teach. To think of helping the world without knowing yourself is very much like a blind person going out to give eye treatment to people at large.** First, clean your eyes. Then, if you can perceive all the eyes of others truly as your own eye, can you remain without helping others?

Workers: Why are we not able to attain *Jnana*, however long we try to hold on to what is mentioned in the *Vedanta Shastras* (scriptures) as *Aham Brahmasmi*

(I am *Brahman*)?

Sri Bhagavan: **There is no *Atma Jnanam* in *Vedanta Shastra*. If one studies oneself, then there is *Atma Jnanam*.**

Workers: How to study ourselves?

Sri Bhagavan: Only if the Self is dual, we can study it, is it not? **The Self, abiding as the Self, is indeed Self-knowledge. Without knowing oneself, by studying the *Veda Shastras*, one can get all the respect one wants from the world. Society will garland this person, recite words of appreciation for him, he will obtain food, name, fame, and money. That is all. But all these are huge obstacles for *Jnana* and *sadhana*.**

Workers: Howsoever we try, alas! The sorrow of *samsara* never ends at all!

Sri Bhagavan: If one inquires as to who is affected by this sorrow of *samsara*, then the sorrow will end.

Workers: It is said that *Atma* can be attained through Patanjali's *Yoga*. Is that so?

Sri Bhagavan: *Yogam* (Union) means there are two entities, and they unite. Will you accept that there are two selves?

Workers: No.

Sri Bhagavan: Where is the question of attaining the *Atma*? Being indeed the Self, to think that I am the body and that there is such a thing as *Atma*, and I need to attain it, is indeed sorrow. *Atma* is not something that is very far away. To attain it one does not need to travel by airplanes or trains. **Much like being inside water, and crying repeatedly 'I am thirsty,' already being the Self, if we say we need to attain the Self, how is this ever possible?**

Workers: Please show us a way for the mind to be annihilated.

Sri Bhagavan: First see who has the mind. If after that, if there is a mind, then let us find a way to destroy it.

Worker: I am the one who has a mind.

Sri Bhagavan: Who are you? Is this body you? If the body is you, then why do these questions not arise in sleep? Will you accept that you are the mind or *prana*?

Worker: No.

Sri Bhagavan: You are *Atma*. Only if there is something apart from you, something other than you, can you either help or hinder it. If all that exists is only you, then where is the question of liking or disliking? **Desirelessness is the greatest bliss.**

Workers: Again, we are asking you due to our ignorance, O Bhagavan! Please forgive us and we request you to answer. It is advised that one should do *Abhyasa* (practice, sadhana) to end the mind. How is that?

Sri Bhagavan: **Who is the one that wants to end the mind? Observing that, is the way to end the mind.**

Worker: Who am I? Alas! I do not know!

Sri Bhagavan: Without knowing who I am, we want to attain something else. We are “That” indeed. Without That, no matter what new divine world or position comes to you, it will vanish at some point. We are not that which comes and goes. That which is always experienced by all, That alone we are. That is *moksha* (liberation).

Worker: How does the Guru help the disciple?

Sri Bhagavan: **Guru and God can only point out “You are That.” They cannot do anything else. To follow that path is the work of the disciple** (Sri Bhagavan became silent). The workers prostrated and left.

#92

Sri Bhagavan once graced us with this: When you tend to fall asleep, wake up. When you are awake, sleep. This indeed is sleeping without sleep. It is said that being without any worries is indeed sleeping without sleep (*Bhagavan is referring to that state which is beyond sleep i.e., beyond sushupti, svapna, and jagrat*).

#93

On April 7th, 1939, a few devotees asked, “O Bhagavan! *Atma* (Self) is not evident to us. Why is that?”

Sri Bhagavan: *Atma* alone is self-evident. No other thing or entity is self-evident. Even though we are so self-evident, the idea that “I am the body” conceals it. If we drop that idea, then *Atma* which is always the experience of all will reveal itself.

Question: Bhagavan, you say it so easily, but for us, the idea that we are the body has not gone!

Sri Bhagavan: Since that thought is so strong, it has not gone.

Question: Why? How did that thought come about?

Sri Bhagavan: It came only because we never enquired about it.

He then recited a song from Kaivalya Navaneetham:

*My dear child! Being impossible to talk about it, Truth is beyond words.
Those who believe that their body, world, etc. are real are indeed immersed in
maya.*

How this falsehood came about, none knows.

*If you ask why this maya came about, it is only because of the absence of
Vichara (enquiry).*

—Kaivalya Navaneetham, Chapter 2, Verse 95

If we see our own Self, the things we see will not be felt as separate from us. Very much like seeing the words on a page without seeing the paper (which is the basis for those words), all this suffering happens because we only see what is manifested, without seeing the substratum. So, we should not be consumed by the manifestations without forgetting the basis for them, the substratum.

How were we while we were asleep? That same Self, we are now as. Why only now should we think that we are the body? While sleeping so many thoughts such as this body, this world, etc. were never there, were they? To identify ourselves with those that appear and disappear is indeed misery. We always have the experience that “I Am.”

“I slept well, I dreamt, I did not know anything when I was unconscious, I woke up”... In all these states, you are the one that is existing, and yet if you search for yourself, where can you find it? Whatever is seen is the Self. The one thing that you should never ever do is to think that you are the body.

#94

9th April 1939.

Devotees asked Sri Bhagavan: What is *satsangam*?

Sri Bhagavan: *Satsangam* is only *Atma sangam*. For those it is not possible, there needs to be *sadhu sangam* which is being in the company (*sangam*) of those who have realized the Truth.

Devotees: When shall we be blessed with *sadhu sangam*?

Sri Bhagavan: Those who for many lives have been performing *puja* to *Iswara*, *japa*, *tapas*, pilgrimages, etc. properly, only they are blessed with *sadhu sangam*. That is, all this will lead them to the *Satguru*.

The song by Saint Thayumanavar Swami is about this.

For those who have been properly initiated with Deity, place of pilgrimage and holy waters of the temple, O Absolute One, to initiate the upadesa a Satguru will be ordained to arrive.

He who has done a lot of *nishkamyapunya* (actions done without expecting results) in his past lives, for him alone will strong faith in the Guru arise. With such faith in his Guru's words and by following the path, he will reach his home (liberation).

Devotees: What are we, who live in a place where there are no *sadhus*, to do? Alas! We cannot have *darshan* of *sadhus* daily, what to do?

Sri Bhagavan: Are you asking what to do? It is for this purpose that idols, pictures, divine names, *pujas*, etc. have been created. **Only those who have first obtained the Grace of *Iswara* will get the Grace of *Satguru*. Only by the Grace of the *Satguru* will he obtain the Grace of the Self, which is within. That indeed is the abode of *moksha* (liberation).**

Sri Bhagavan said: **Man first ruins himself. Then he thinks of ruining others.**

#96

I once asked Sri Bhagavan: Since a person's happiness and sorrow are only the result of his past actions, so in the present, if one desires or expects something to happen a certain way, will that happen?

Sri Bhagavan: Aha! For one who has done a lot of meritorious deeds, whatever he thinks will happen. This happens for both the *Jnani* and *ajnani* in general. That is, it happens by *ichai* (according to his desire), *anichai* (without his desire), *parechai* (by God's wish). If sins are more, the results will manifest right away. When both *punya* (good deeds) and *paapa* (bad deeds) are more, the results will manifest in this life itself. For example, in recent times it rained gold for Vidyanaraya Swami (in answer to his prayers to Goddess Lakshmi).

#97

One day Sri Bhagavan graced us by saying: Even for the *Jnani* who is in the *Varishta* stage (a supreme state), *vasanas* appear to manifest according to his *prarabdha* (They seem to manifest at the body level, but a *Jnani* is beyond the body and *prarabdha* - *prarabdha* is only for the body).

Vasanas are of two types: *bandhahethu* (*vasanas* that lead a *jiva* to bondage) and *mokshahethu* (*vasanas* that lead a *jiva* to liberation) (These two *vasanas* are only in a *jiva* and not in a *Jnani* because he is beyond all *vasanas*).

Akarmam (actionless action) indeed is *Jnana*. Effortlessly doing whatever comes on its own is *Jnana*.

#98

In answering a question raised by someone about the topic of *siddhi* (supernormal powers), Sri Bhagavan said, “Ever abiding in one’s Self without wavering, is the greatest *Nitya siddhi* (eternal *siddhi*). All other *siddhis* are merely the result of the *prarabdha* of the *Jnani*. They are *siddhis* of no value.”

#99

One day I asked Sri Bhagavan: Can one practice *sahaja samadhi* in the beginning stage itself?

Sri Bhagavan: Aha! One can practice it very well.

I asked: How to practice it? How to be in *nirvikalpa samadhi*? What are the types of *samadhis*?

Sri Bhagavan: *Samadhi* is only one indeed. Not many kinds. **Without any thoughts, abiding in the Self is *nirvikalpa samadhi*. Never forgetting one’s Self (during activity) is *sahaja samadhi*. Both are equally blissful.**

#100

On the night of June 19th, 1942 Sri Bhagavan spoke about the greatness (*Mahatmyam*) of Arunachala:

“This is not a hill that appears at one point in time and destroyed later. It has neither beginning nor end. It is a *Swayambu Lingam* — Meaning of *Lingam*: *ling* means union, *gam* means manifests. There are many more meanings such as God, *Atma*, Siva, and so many other names. This hill is not of the earth. All universes owe their existence to this hill. *Lingam* is the source of all manifestation and dissolution.”

Bhagavan told another story: *Purana* (epic) stories say that God takes the dust of his devotees' feet, keeps it in a box, covers it with silk cloth, and does *puja* to it. God does it to demonstrate that he is the devotee of his devotees. Whoever in the world worships me, I worship him.

#101

The next day a devotee was approaching Sri Bhagavan, requesting his permission to touch his feet and prostrate to him. Sri Bhagavan said, "The feet of Sri Bhagavan are only in the heart of the *bhakta* (devotee). Hold on to it continuously. That indeed is happiness. If you hold on to my feet, you will be deceived. These feet will vanish one day." With laughter, he said, "Worshipping the holy feet of one's Self is the greatest worship."

#102

Sri Bhagavan said: Each person has his own separate world. Why? Since each person has his own principles, there are separate *mokshas* accordingly. But the true abode of *moksha* is a unique experience for all in deep sleep.

#103

Sri Bhagavan said: There should be no one humbler than us. Only the one who knows how to be the humblest, he alone can become the greatest of all. God is like an atom to the smallest atom and much larger than the largest creation. All are God's form indeed. **Because of our *bedha buddhi* (the idea of differentiation), we consider ourselves to be an individual. There is no greater mistake in the world than this.**

#104

Sri Bhagavan once said, “What we see in the waking state and that which we see in dreams are both the same. There is not even an iota of difference. The purpose of dreams is only to prove that the waking state is false. By the grace of God, the world in the waking state keeps changing continuously, and yet we assume that the same world we saw before is still there. So how are we to know that the world we see in the waking state is false? History says that this world has been here for thousands and thousands of years. As a result, we conclude that the world we see in the waking state does not change and is indeed real. This is only our ignorance.

The world keeps changing every minute. If you ask how, our body now is not the same body we had when we were young. For example, a lamp is lit at night and continues to glow the next day. We say the lamp has not changed, but is that right? Hasn't it been changing continuously? Hasn't the oil been changing?

A river has so much water flowing continuously. When we see the river the next day, we assume that the water that was flowing yesterday is the same water that is flowing today also. Is that right? The water that was flowing yesterday has changed long ago and is no longer here now. Similarly, the world is continuously changing. **The world is not permanent. Whereas we (Self) remain the same, without any change whatsoever, in all three states of waking, dream, and deep sleep. No one can say that he does not exist. Therefore, we (Self) are the permanent reality. Do not forget this. This indeed is the home (abode of Freedom)."**

#105

Once Sri Bhagavan graced us by saying: It is mentioned in *Sootha Samhita* regarding the greatness of a *Jivan Mukta* (liberated while in bodily form) that whosoever comes into the presence of a *Jivan Mukta* will be liberated from all sins and will become *muktas* themselves. And that the very lineage of the *Jivan Mukta* is absolutely pure; that his mother is one who has attained the highest goal; that because of the *Jivan Mukta* the whole earth becomes absolutely pure and so on. Also, since a *Jnani* incarnates in the world, the four categories of people namely: devotees, disciples, those who are indifferent, and the sinners — all of them will attain liberation. This is proven by so many examples from the past.

#106

One day Sri Bhagavan graced us by saying: The amount of sin that one incurs by not remembering God, an equal amount of sin is incurred by one who has reached a state of high spiritual maturity but yet thinks “I am different, God is different.” The fate of the mature one who thinks he is different from God is the same fate as that of the one that never remembers God.

Om Namo Bhagavathe Sri Ramanaya.

Sri Annamalai Swami. This photo was taken around 1975 (age 69)

Diary Part 2

Sri Annamalai Swami had made the following notes in a separate notebook. Each note reveals a unique blessing from Bhagavan to his devotee Sri Annamalai Swami.

#1

Sri Bhagavan graced us with this message regarding construction:

When the construction of the Pelakothu building (*the one-room house in Pelakothu that was built for Annamalai Swami under the grace of Bhagavan*) was in the beginning stage, Bhagavan came on his own accord and asked me, “What is this construction for? And what are the bricks for?”

I told him it was to build a small room. Sri Bhagavan then asked “Is it going to be a tiled roof or a terrace above?” He also made a pointed remark saying “Building the walls with limestone will be good.”

On many occasions, he often enquired about the new room being built for me in Pelakothu. One day he told me, “For the roof, using palm wood will be good. In our Thiruchuzi home also it was used.” Then after a few days, a devotee named Ramasami Mudaliyar from Achiruppakkam purchased some palm wood from the neighboring village and gave it to me. As soon as the palm wood arrived, I updated Sri Bhagavan with the details of their length, weight, etc. When I told him about the weight of the wood, Bhagavan said, “*Besh*” (a colloquial word that means great or superb. Sri Annamalai Swami used to say, it was a rare blessing to get a “*Besh*” compliment from Sri Bhagavan). Regarding the length, he said, “Very Good” and as for the density of the wood, he remarked, “Oh What a steal!” In this manner, Sri Bhagavan

gave me three rare blessings in three different ways by using the palm wood as a pretext.

Above, the darshan room in Sri Annamalai Swami's home is pictured. The doorway leads to the original room that Bhagavan helped build. Swami lived there till his mahasamadhi.

#2

Later one day Sri Bhagavan asked, "Do you have a grinding stone in your room?" I answered, "Yes, I do have one." For that Sri Bhagavan said, "Then what more is needed?" Thus, using the grinding stone as a pretext, he showered upon me the blessing that I lacked nothing.

#3

One day, while walking with Sri Bhagavan on the hill I said:

"I have decided to leave the *ashram* and lead a life of solitude outside in Pelakothu, to involve myself in meditation and to keep getting Sri Bhagavan's *darshan*."

I asked for Sri Bhagavan's permission. Sri Bhagavan gave me his consent, saying these gracious words three times. "Aha! Very Good, Very Good, Very Good."

#4

I told Sri Bhagavan, "I have decided to observe the vow of silence." For that too, Sri Bhagavan blessed me, "Very Good."

On May 7th, 1939, the observance of silence began.

Annamalai Swami standing behind Bhagavan (4th from left)

In 1985, Sri Annamalai Swami had his Samadhi temple built next to his house. He installed a Shiva Lingam and worship was performed daily. After his mahasamadhi, his divine body was placed in this temple, This is a picture of Swami standing in his Samadhi temple.

Diary Part 3

A third notebook contains the following hand-written notes by Sri Annamalai Swami.

#1

May 15th, 1939.

In the evening, as Sri Bhagavan was returning from his stroll, I asked him a question: Bhagavan says being still (*Summa Iru*) means to be always active, and being in *maunam* (silence) means to be speaking always. I do not quite understand this.

Sri Bhagavan (still walking): Is that so? Are you able to perceive “I am”?

My humble self: Yes, I perceive.

Sri Bhagavan: How do you perceive?

My humble self: Oh! I do not know how I perceive that “I am.”

Sri Bhagavan: Just like that indeed. Being still means doing work always. Doing work does not mean digging with a spade. **Working means ever shining as That (Self).** Remaining in silence, indeed, is speaking forever. Further, both (action and silence) are the same. This is what is referred to by great men so graciously as, “I think without thinking (the thinker), say without saying (the speaker), listen without listening (the listener.)” If you remain without speaking, God will come and speak indeed. Silent exposition is indeed a great *Shashtra* (scripture). If that one thing is learnt, all doubts will vanish.

Instead, even if you read countless millions of books as vast as the sky, your doubts will never vanish.

I informed Sri Bhagavan that from the next day onwards I was going to observe a vow of silence. Sri Bhagavan blessed me saying, “Aha, very good.” Then he asked “Why? Where are you going? You are here, correct?”

I told him, “Even if I stay here in solitude, some people come unnecessarily to gossip and waste my time. So, I thought that observing the vow of silence would be good.”

Sri Bhagavan wiped his mouth with his right hand indicating that it should remain closed. I understood this gesture of Sri Bhagavan to mean “Enough of speech!” and I returned to Pelakothu.

Two days before this, in the verandah of Cohen’s building at Pelakothu, we cut some *Nungu* (palm fruit) thinking we could offer them to Sri Bhagavan, since Sri Bhagavan would usually go out around noon and return this way. Sri Bhagavan came. Looking at me, he asked repeatedly, around 7 or 8 times, “Oye! Why did you come here?”

I was silent for a few moments and then answered, “I came here to cut some palm fruit and offer it to Sri Bhagavan.”

Sri Bhagavan said, “Why don’t all of you eat them thinking each of you is Bhagavan indeed!” Thus, laughing heartily, he dug into the fruit with his fingers and sucked it with his mouth. He then walked away with a sigh, “*Appadi!* (a satisfying feeling) I can’t lift my belly!”

#2

On June 4th, 1939, I discovered the beautiful Annamalai in Arunachala - that is none other than Sri Ramanagiri himself (*referring to Bhagavan as the real mountain*). Having concluded that circumambulating this Ramanagiri (*referring to Ramanashramam*) is the real way to *moksham*, from today

onwards, I have started doing *pradakshina* (circumambulation) of Ramanagiri in the night. The paths for this *pradakshina* have been created around the borders of Sri Ramanashramam like a royal road.

Only the one who knows the inner principle of Ramanagiri can know the inner principle of Arunagiri. If one asks what the speciality of Sri Ramanagiri is - Here Sri Bhagavan in the form of Sri Dakshinamurthy gives *upadesa* in silence; The graceful power of Azhagammal (Bhagavan's mother) shines as Mathrubooteswara enshrined in the temple; River Ganga is overflowing its banks here; Dhanalakshmi (Goddess of wealth) dances here daily; Saraswati (Goddess of knowledge) chants the Ramanageetham.

Herds of cows are dancing in joy; Brahmins well-versed in the *vedas* chant them; Annalakshmi (Goddess of food) feeds everyone; Hordes of devotees serve other devotees with love; *Siddhas* do splendid service; Liberated ones appear here; The crowd of silent *sadhakas* worships the flowery feet; A crowd of kings falls at the feet of the Guru.

All of the above are Sri Ramana Bhagavan himself, the highest peak, shining bright as a flame. People who do not know this, deluded by poor vision, engage in slandering, eating dust, are lying dead. What a pity! What to do? Open your eyes and protect us, bless us, O mount Ramana! This humble self needs just your gracious look. Just as Sri Vinayaka went around his parents to win the divine mango fruit, those who circumambulate this Ramanagiri patiently and with love will definitely attain the fruit of Grace. This is a certainty.

#3

On June 4th, 1939, a devotee wrote the following question to Sri Bhagavan: O Bhagavan! I must attain *mukti*. For that, you alone are my Guru. I do not

approach anyone else. Please bless me.

Sri Bhagavan: *Mukti* is not something new to be attained. **We all are indeed the embodiment of *mukti*. We forget this. The erroneous thought that we are the body leads to thousands of thoughts, wave after wave, which instantly cover us.** Only when we totally give up this thought (that I am the body) *mukti* will shine.

Devotee: **How to give up the thought that I am the body?**

Sri Bhagavan: **Since you have prayed to the Guru, surrender totally to him.**

Devotee: Alas! There is no Guru in the town where I live!

Sri Bhagavan: Guru is verily inside you. Surrender to him alone.

Devotee: Is it not the Self that is in me?

Sri Bhagavan: All are indeed one. We call it using different names such as Guru, *Atma*, and *Iswara*, but they mean the same thing.

Devotee: After surrendering will one be able to work?

Sri Bhagavan: Why not? Work will be done, but the thought that I am doing the work will not arise.

Devotee: How does work happen, if the 'I' thought is not there?

Sri Bhagavan: Do you work in the office with the same involvement with which you handle your family affairs? You are doing it merely for a salary. The gains and losses at work do not bother you. That is how you must work, without attachment.

Devotee: **I am often faced with difficulties. How will they go?**

Sri Bhagavan: Give up the *dehatma buddhi* (the idea that you are the body). All difficulties will fly away.

#4

On June 5th, 1939, a devotee asked Sri Bhagavan: What is the difference between *Iswara* (God) and the *Mukta* (Liberated)?

Sri Bhagavan: *Iswara* and the *Jnani* are one and the same but the *Mukta* (*Jnani*), initially being forgetful of the Self, later through the strength of *abhyasa* (practice) realizes the Self. It is not so with *Iswara*. He is verily the *Nitya Mukta* (eternally free). Yet, since *Iswara* performs *Panchakritya* (the five-fold duties of creation, preservation, destruction, concealment, and providing salvation) the thoughts of *Iswara* are called ‘*Brahmakara vritti*’ (mind merged in *Brahman*.) Just like ‘*Samudhrakara Nadhi*’ (a river that has merged with the ocean.) The *vritti* (thought) of both *Iswara* and a *Mukta* is the same. But for *avatara purushas* (incarnations of God), as long as there is *prarabdha* (a portion of past karma that has to be experienced in the present life), the *avatars* keep changing till the end of the *Kalpa* (long period, an eon). But it is not so for other *Muktas*.

My humble self: O Bhagavan! Sri Rama as a newborn child would have had *dehatma buddhi* (the idea that I am the body), right?

Sri Bhagavan: Sri Rama first gave *darshan* as Vishnu to Kousalya. And then he incarnated as a child. Further, when he was in the forest, he wandered searching for Sita crying, “Where is Sita? Where is she?” Then Parvati asked *Iswara*, “Doesn’t Rama know where Sita is? Why should he wander in search of her?” *Iswara* told her, “You take the form of Sita and stand before Rama. Then you will know.” Parvathi took the exact form of Sita and stood before

Rama. Sri Rama, as though not recognizing her, kept searching, “Where is Sita? Where is she?”

Also, in the following song from Kaivalya Navaneetham, it is mentioned that *Iswara* and the *Jnani* are one. The song is as follows:

O Guru who manifests as God, formless and with form

Told us that God and Jnani are the same, how is it so?

God and Jnani are the same once ‘I and Mine’ have been obliterated

He is the One who is God, numerous jivas, the world and all!

#5

On June 6th, 1939, a person asked Sri Bhagavan: It is said in the *puranas* (epics) that being in Kailash, Vaikuntam, and Brahmaloaka is indeed *moksha* (liberation). Is that so? Or does *moksha* mean the merging in *Brahman* without consciousness of body, mind, and world?

Sri Bhagavan: It is not *moksha* to be present in Kailash or Vaikunta. If everybody goes to Kailash and Vaikunta, where is the space available for all to live? Where are Kailash, Vaikunta and Swarga? If I continue to exist separate from God and then enjoy the bliss of God, in that case God has to be *jada* (inert). If He is *jada*, where is the question of enjoying his bliss?

For him who is the bliss of Self arising from the extinction of the ego, what is there to do? He knows nothing other than his Self. How to conceive the nature of his state?

— Ulladu Narpadu, Verse 31

#6

On the night of 10th June 1939, I went to attend Sri Ramana Bhagavan's mother's *maha puja* and to take some *prasadam* (food offered to the deity first). On the way, there was a huge crowd. In the hustle and bustle I lost the cloth I was wearing on my upper body. I returned, feeling that I would not be able to eat in such a crowd. A devotee saw me returning and asked, "Why did you come back?" and in a second, he dispersed the crowd, making enough room for me. Only after that did I go for lunch. After eating lunch, I came to Sri Bhagavan and narrated this incident.

Sri Bhagavan immediately responded, "*Romba laabam*," (Great gain indeed) referring to the lost cloth.

From that day onwards I decided to be with just a *dhoti* (without the cloth covering the upper body). Who can alter His deeds!

#7

On June 17th, 1939, I asked Sri Bhagavan: In the *Shastras*, it is said that even a *Jivan Mukta* (one who attained liberation in his bodily life) will only act according to his *prarabdha*. But O Bhagavan! How do you say that there is no *prarabdha* for the *Jnani*?

Sri Bhagavan: For the *Jnani* there is neither *Shashtra* nor *prarabdha*. These do not apply to the *Jnani*. The rules of *Shastras* have been created only for the *ajnanis*. We can use an analogy to explain *prarabdha* for a *Jnani*. For example, assume that a man has three wives. If the man dies and you say that only two of his wives are now widows and one remains a *sumangali* (a woman whose husband is alive), who will accept it? Are not all three widows? So also for the *Jnani*, none of the three types of *karma* are applicable. Indeed, there is

no *karma* at all for the *Jnani*. *Prarabdha* is only for those who see and ask this question.

In the song from Ulladu Narpadu Appendix – verse 33, this idea is mentioned:

On knowing the Self, the act of doership having gone, all three types of karmas will vanish. The state of mukti is eternal indeed.

#8

On 19th June 1939, a lady scholar lovingly requested, “O Sri Bhagavan! I want to attain peace. You alone can help me.”

Sri Bhagavan: ***Shanti (peace) indeed is our real nature.*** How can we attain it in the future? For example, if one has a headache right from birth till his death, he never thinks of taking medicine for it. This is because the headache is ever-present and natural to him. Just like this, peace also is always ever-present and natural. What enters and disrupts the peace is the differential thought that I am separate. In sleep, this differentiation is not there. That I slept well is an experience for all. If you wonder how, it is like a person standing in water up to his mouth and shouting “I am thirsty,” or like saying that the water itself is thirsty. **Peace, Happiness, and Moksha — all these are indeed our natural names.**

#9

On 22nd June 1939, in the morning when Sri Bhagavan was returning from the hill, he saw T. K. Sundaresa Iyer’s son and exhorted him with words of caution, “Oye! Your father complained to me that you are spending money wastefully and without limit. You should not spend more than what you earn.

You should be thrifty. Fire, debt, sensual pleasures, poison — even a single drop of these will destroy us for sure.”

#10

Once Sri Bhagavan briefly told the devotees about the glory of *Giri pradakshinam* (circumambulation of the mountain): For the devotee who circumambulates Arunagiri with deep devotion, the stones on the *pradakshina* path will pierce the soles of his feet, making them red. Similarly, great kings wearing crowns studded with rubies will prostrate in front of that devotee. That too will make the soles of his feet turn red.

#11

On 25th June 1939, Sri Bhagavan while talking to a devotee, said the following about *Jnana*:

1. “Words of *Jnani* are *asariri* (without a body. So, God’s words.)”
2. **“Trying to understand a *Jnani*’s actions is like trying to measure the sky using the palm of your hand as a scale.”**
3. “*Atma* is the subtlest, being smaller than the point of a pin, like an atom to the smallest atom, and much larger than the largest creation.”

#12

On 8th June 1939, Dr. Syed Saheb affectionately asked Bhagavan the following question and Sri Bhagavan graced him with the answer:

Question: God is indeed omnipresent. Why should he incarnate on this earth in every age? Why can't he perform his actions, being present everywhere?

Sri Bhagavan: Indeed, to bless those who have done meritorious deeds without expecting results, and to destroy sinners, incarnations with divine powers are sent to the world by the ordains of *Iswara*. He also sends devotees along with the incarnation to carry out specific tasks and as soon as their work is accomplished, they return to their respective places in higher spiritual realms. For *avatara purushas* (incarnations) even though the body changes from one incarnation to another, their experience that they are the one and the same Self never changes. To give you an illustration, even though the modifications of youth, old age, etc. continuously affect a person and cause so many changes in his body and mind, the thought that the same person exists right from birth till old age remains unchanged. Similarly, for the incarnated ones, no matter how many births they take, they remain with the conviction that they are always the same Self. It is like seeing ten types of dreams ten times in the same night.

These questions do not exist where the Self is realized. Without knowing the Truth of oneself, people talking about so many things is a sheer waste of time.

#13

On July 18th, 1939, Rameswari Nehru, a congress worker asked Sri Bhagavan some questions.

Question: What is Sri Bhagavan's opinion on *harijans* (low castes) entering temples?

Sri Bhagavan: I don't have a specific opinion. Everything happens by the divine power of God. Whatever needs to be accomplished, in whichever manner, He will make it happen accordingly.

Question: Is it good for a person to do social service or is it good to do meditation sitting in a cave?

Sri Bhagavan: Both are good. But only he who has learned how to serve his own Self is capable of serving society.

#14

On the night of 22nd July 1939, some questions were raised by Maurice Friedman. Sri Bhagavan's responses follow.

Question: Bhagavan has sung "Do not practice *advaita* in actions." Why is that? Isn't everything one? Why show differentiation in this?

Sri Bhagavan: Would you like to sit on the sofa I am sitting on?

Question: Aha! I will sit on it, but people like the *sarvadhikari* here will beat me and drive me out.

Sri Bhagavan: Just like that. No one will accept it. Saying that all are one, if someone molests a woman, will everyone leave him alone? There is a story illustrating this. Some people wanted to put to test the statement in the Bhagavad Gita that a *Jnani* perceives everything as one. To see if it was true, they came up with a plan. They went to the court of King Janaka who was a *Jnani* taking along with them a brahmin, an outcast, a cow, an elephant, and a dog. They reached the court of King Janaka. On seeing them, King Janaka sent the brahmin to the brahmins' quarters, the cow to a cowshed, the elephant to a place where elephants were housed, the dog to a kennel, and the outcast to the place other outcasts were staying. He then ordered his servants to arrange for food for each of them properly, according to each one's needs.

People asked him, “Why are you separating them like that? Aren’t all one and the same to you?” Janaka said, “Yes, all are one indeed, but *Atma tripti* (satisfaction) varies according to each one’s nature.

Will a man eat hay that is eaten by the cow? Will cows consume the food eaten by men? We should only do that which gives *tripti* to each being.

Let us not hate the sinner. We should only hate his sins. Even a sinner would want to be treated thus.

The same person might perform several roles in a play. While playing the role of a king, he will act like a king indeed. In that role, he will rise to the throne and rule his kingdom. The same person, when he plays the role of a scavenger would walk carrying his master’s sandals in his hands. He derives no gain or loss as a result. Similarly, a *Jnani* never forgets that it is He who has taken on all these roles.”

Thus, King Janaka gave *upadesa* and cleared the doubts of those who came to test him.

#15

On August 2nd, 1939 I asked Sri Bhagavan, “Sri Bhagavan says that if one attains *Jnana*, he is no longer bound by the three *karmas*. But in Kaivalya Navaneetham it is said that the *Jnani* will only experience his *prarabdha*. Why is that?”

Sri Bhagavan: Since *prarabdha* is already destined before he acquires *Jnana*, it is only for those who see him that it appears as though the *Jnani* experiences *prarabdha*. There are many analogies to explain this.

A hunter shot an arrow at what he thought was a tiger. Instead, it turned out to be a cow. Now, even if the hunter repents thinking, “Oh! It is not a tiger; why did I shoot the arrow to kill a cow?”, the arrow that left his bow would have still hit the cow.

An electric fan, even after it is switched off, will continue to run for some time.

A rope that has been burnt still looks like a rope, but it cannot be used for tying anything.

A tree that has been cut down still resembles a living tree, but it is by no means a living tree.

Fried grains are grains too, but they cannot sprout.

The *prarabdha* of a *Jnani* is just like what we see in these five examples. There is no *prarabdha* from the standpoint of a *Jnani*. Only from the standpoint of an observer, it appears as though the *Jnani* is experiencing *prarabdha*.

#16

On 8th August 1939, a noble lady from America posed a few questions which were gracefully answered by Bhagavan as follows:

Question: What is the state that I should attain? I request Sri Bhagavan to kindly explain it to me clearly (Requesting with great respect).

Sri Bhagavan: It is everlasting happiness that is most dear to everyone, and it is only that which we should attain. We keep searching for it and try to attain it in many ways. But it is not something that is new and to be attained in the

future. **It is already an experience for everyone and is our real nature, this experience that “I Am.” This is always with us. Even though we all are experiencing this, due to our ignorance we imagine that it is somewhere outside of us and therefore, our mind is always seeking it without rest. To give an analogy, it is like a person using his very tongue to say that he has no tongue.**

Question: Then why is there a need for so many *sadhanas*?

Sri Bhagavan: It is only to drop the idea that this experience is something new to be attained, that so many *sadhanas* exist. **Forgetting oneself, thinking that I am the body is indeed the root of *maya*. The rising of this single thought, instantly multiplies into thousands of thoughts and covers the Self. Only if we dispel all these thoughts will the Truth of the Self shine in all its splendour. Then what remains is only *Brahmananda* (the bliss of *Brahman*).**

Question: Right now, I don't have this thought that I am the body, and I feel peaceful. Is this indeed the true state?

Sri Bhagavan: Yes, it should remain like this continuously, without changing. (After some time if it changes, it means that the remaining thoughts have not yet disappeared.)

Question: How to make the remaining thoughts end?

Sri Bhagavan: Only by the strong enquiry as to who is the one that has this thought, can this happen.

The next day, this American lady had some more doubts. Again, she approached Sri Bhagavan and started asking questions.

Question: What is the way to see God?

Sri Bhagavan: Where to see God? First, can you see yourself? If you can see yourself, you can see God. Can anyone see his eye himself? No. Therefore can he say he has no eye just because he cannot see it? In the same way, one cannot see God and cannot be without seeing God also. To see God, we need to give up the thought that I am separate from God. Thinking that I am separate from God is the greatest wonder in the world. There is no other wonder greater than this.

To explain this, there is a story in Chandogya Upanishad. A man was fast asleep, lying on the bed in his house. Then he had a dream. In that dream, someone made him unconscious by spreading a sedative on his nose, blindfolded him, tied his hands, and dropped him in the middle of a forest. No knowing the way back, he walked over stones, thorns, and rough terrain, crying in pain. Then an angel appeared and asked him, “Why dear, are you weeping? What is your name? Who are you? Why did you come here?” He told the Angel his name, his town, etc. and said, “Someone sedated me, made me unconscious, and left me in the forest after blindfolding me and tying my hands.”

The Angel untied him and showed him the way back home saying, “Here, if you go this way, you will reach your home.”

He followed the path until he finally reached his town and arrived at his home. Immediately he saw the inside of his door. The door was not even open. It was locked. And he was lying on his bed! Never did he go to any forest nor return from there! He then understood that he suffered all these troubles only because of his *avichara buddhi* (mind deluded by the lack of enquiry).

Seeing God and attaining God is just like the difficulties illustrated in this story. Avoiding the thought that it is something new to be attained and abiding as the Self is indeed the attainment of it.

Thus, in a detailed manner, Sri Bhagavan gracefully gave the American lady the true *upadesa* that abiding as one's Self alone is attaining God. Through her, Sri Bhagavan dispelled the ghosts of doubts in the minds of all devotees and shone like the Sun of *Jnana* that destroys all darkness.

Shubam, Shubam, Mangalam
(Peace, Peace, Auspiciousness)

A few devotees had requested Sri Annamalai Swami to bless them. That moment was captured beautifully with Swami's radiating smile.

A Note from Sundaram Swami

Disciple and Attendant of Sri Annamalai Swami for 21 years
President of Sri Satguru Annamalai Swamigal Spiritual Trust.

From a young age, I was inclined towards meeting *sadhus*, taking care of their needs, and traveling to temples and other holy places. The thirst to find a Guru for spiritual evolution was strong from the beginning. In 1974 during my travels, I came across a publication series called Arunachala Mahimai. It talked about the lives of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, Sri Seshadri Swami and Sri Annamalai Swami, among others. The article mentioned that Sri Annamalai Swami, an *Atma Jnani* was living by himself in Tiruvannamalai. I knew how rare it is to get a *darshan* of a living *Jnani*. Immediately I felt a strong urge to go and meet him. I was 23 at that time, a bachelor working for the State Government of Tamil Nadu in Salem. Very soon, I left for Tiruvannamalai with a friend and had my first *darshan* of Sri Annamalai Swami. He was 69 years at that time and living all by himself.

Swami spoke to us for three hours about various spiritual matters. That day, I felt strongly that my future life was destined to be spent with this Swami, serving him. He told us to come and visit him frequently, which I did, almost monthly. Each visit brought me closer to the Swami. I would help him with various chores. Since he didn't travel at all, he needed assistance with basic things such as paying the electricity bill! Nearly two years went by this way.

On February 12th, 1976 I received an inland letter from Sri Annamalai Swami. It was handwritten by him in Tamil. I remember the contents exactly: *Please resign your job and leave immediately to come here and serve me — Annamalai Swami.*

I was overjoyed on seeing the letter. The very same day I left for Tiruvannamalai to start a new life at the feet of Sri Annamalai Swami. When I

walked into Sri Annamalai Swami's house and prostrated to him, Swami welcomed me and said, "Think of your life until this moment as a dream and forget it." I accepted his words and lived by them. Immediately I started to immerse myself in *Guru Seva* by attending to Swami's needs, buying basic supplies, cooking, cleaning, taking care of outside work, etc.

For the next 21 years, I served as Sri Annamalai Swami's attendant and disciple, living with him in Pelakothu. More about my journey with Sri Annamalai Swamigal can be read on the website at SriAnnamalaiSwami.org/lateryears.

From the year 1982 onwards, Swami began conducting evening *satsang* to offer guidance to devotees in their *sadhana*. In 1994, during *satsang*, Sri Annamalai Swami spoke about his spiritual journey in detail. I used translate his words into English verbatim, for the Western devotees. David Godman came a few times and recorded these translations. Besides this, during various *satsangs*, I regularly used to translate Sri Annamalai Swami's words for the benefit of all the western devotees present. They took detailed notes. These notes along with the translation of the recordings were edited by David Godman and published by Sri Annamalai Swami Ashram Trust in book form under the title "Living by the Words of Bhagavan." This book contains Sri Annamalai Swami's biography as well as his teachings.

In 1995, during the last six months of Sri Annamalai Swami's bodily life, he graced devotees with saintly guidance that reflected the essence of his experience as well as his lifelong devotion to his Guru and his teachings. I used translate his words into English as he spoke. This was recorded by Mira, a devotee from Japan. David Godman helped with the editing of these conversations and a book was published by Sri Annamalai Swami Ashram Trust under the title "Annamalai Swami — Final Talks".

Towards the final days of Sri Annamalai Swami's bodily life, I asked Swami what would happen to my spiritual journey. I asked him who would free this soul. Swami replied that there was nothing to worry about: *Another Jnani will come. He will take care of you.*

After Sri Annamalai Swami's *mahasamadhi*, I was grief-stricken. Twenty-one years of service to my Guru had ended. At that time, I was also managing the Annamalai Swami Trust and all its activities. I continued these activities for another eight years. Yet, there was no peace in me. After considerable thought I decided to hand everything over to Sri Ramanashramam as an offering to Bhagavan and travel to the Himalayas to get a change in place and to find some peace. By divine will, we the trustees donated all of the Sri Annamalai Swami Ashram property including large areas of land, to Sri Ramanashramam as an offering to Bhagavan Sri Ramana. After completing all of the formalities and dissolving the Trust, I left Tiruvannamalai. For six years I wandered across the Himalayan region, where I was blessed to meet many *Jnanis*. I served them.

Six years passed but deep inside I knew my heart was in Tiruvannamalai. So, I returned in the year 2006 and spent the next four years in solitude, doing *Giri pradakshina* every day around Arunachala. On that Girivalam road in 2010, by sheer grace I met Sri Mahaprabu, a rare and unique *Brahma Jnani*. I knew him from my early years as a very sincere devotee of Bhagavan Sri Ramana and Sri Annamalai Swami who used to visit Sri Ramanashramam and Annamalai Swami Samadhi frequently. By then, Sri Mahaprabu had attained the state of *sahaja samadhi*, a result of Sri Bhagavan's grace and his own tremendous effort. Out of great compassion, he took me in as his disciple and has been guiding me ever since, exactly as Sri Annamalai Swami had told me before he attained *mahasamadhi*: *Another Jnani will come. He will take care of you.*

Based on the guidelines offered by Sri Mahaprabu combined with the help of old devotees of Annamalai Swami, two Trusts were established to continue the spiritual services. Sri Satguru Annamalai Swamigal Spiritual Trust and Sri Satguru Annamalai Swamigal Memorial Trust. As we had wholeheartedly donated all properties of the earlier Trust to Sri Ramanashramam, we had to start and run these new Trusts from scratch.

Since then, the Trusts have published various books including Kadaisi Varthaigal (Tamil translation of Final Talks), Sri Bhagavanum Adiyenum (Sri Annamalai Swami's diary notes in Tamil), Annamalai Swami Anthima Sambasanamulu (Telugu translation of Final Talks), and Bhagavan Adugujadalalo — Annamalai Swami Jeevitham (Telugu translation of Living by the Words of Bhagavan). Various CDs and DVDs of Sri Annamalai Swami's talks have also been published. An [official website for Sri Annamalai Swami](http://SriAnnamalaiSwami.org) was created and launched in 2020. The site has been well-received by devotees around the world. Please visit the website at SriAnnamalaiSwami.org.

For many years, the Trust was run from a small rental house. By the Grace of Bhagavan and Sri Annamalai Swami, in 2019 a devotee made a donation of land in Paliapattu village and also donated funds for the construction of the first building.

One of Sri Annamalai Swami's main instructions was that it is indispensable for spiritual seekers to have a living realized master as a guide. By Sri Bhagavan's grace and blessings, *Sahajathma Jnani* Sri Mahaprabu has become the beacon of our lives and is closely guiding us with great love and compassion. He conducts *satsang* regularly in Paliapattu Village at Tiruvannamalai — Chengam Highway.

Devotees are cordially informed that all our spiritual *sadhanas* and the activities of the Trust are being conducted according to the graceful guidance

of Sri Mahaprabu.

Yours in Sri Bhagavan,

Sundaram Swami

President,

Sri Satguru Annamalai Swamigal Spiritual Trust

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*Sundaram Swami sitting with Sri Annamalai Swami on Sri Annamalai
Swami's Jayanthi day, 1980.*

Sri Mahaprabu

Sri Mahaprabu

A brief write-up by a devoted disciple

Sri Mahaprabu is a *Brahma Jnani*, who attained liberation in the year 2003 by the grace of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi. Since 2010 he has been conducting *satsang* regularly at Sri Annamalai Swamigal Spiritual Trust. The following is a brief introduction to Sri Mahaprabu.

Venkatesan (birth name of Sri Mahaprabu) was born into a very ordinary family in southern Tamil Nadu. It wasn't until he was in his teen years that a very strong desire began to consume the youth. The desire to know about birth, death and who he really was. Seeing death all around him at a young age and realizing the certainty of his own death strengthened this desire into an unstoppable urge, one that must have been simmering and evolving for many lives past. This single-pointedness brought him to Tiruvannamalai in the year 1993.

Entering Ramanasramam for the first time, he saw the board which described Sri Bhagavan's death experience in detail. He instantly knew he had come to the right place where all his questions would be answered. Being a sincere devotee of Lord Annamalaiyar (Shiva) and Sri Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi, it was by sheer grace that he was soon connected with Sri Annamalai Swami Ashram in Pelakottu (adjacent to Sri Ramanasramam). He would go there regularly to attend the various *parayanas* being conducted, as well as for the monthly *Swathi Puja* of Sri Annamalai Swami.

He used to spend most of his time in meditation at the forests of Arunachala hill, Bhagavan Sri Ramana's samadhi and Sri Annamalai Swami's samadhi shrine. He diligently pursued the path of self-enquiry taught by Sri Bhagavan and Sri Annamalai Swami. Thus, for 10 years he underwent a rigorous *sadhana*, unwavering in his determination despite numerous trials and

tribulation, thanks to his burning desire to know the Truth, his steadfast *bhakti* (devotion) and his strong faith in Bhagavan. And on January 1st, 2003 'IT' happened. The dissolution of the individual into the universal. Sri Mahaprabu was born.

For the next 45 days he was in a state of blissful *samadhi* going into indescribable depths of experience. The next three years were spent mostly in solitude, revelling in a state that words cannot describe. Not only did his spiritual friends observe a significant change in his lifestyle but were able to feel a tremendous silence in his presence. They began to share their questions with him and received an inner clarity they had never experienced before.

In 2006, Sri Mahaprabu received a divine message from Lord Buddha who instructed him to share his experiences and guide true seekers of the Truth. With the blessings of Sri Buddha, Mahaprabu started his *satsangs* in Paliappatu (at the outskirts of Tiruvannamalai) in 2006. Devotees of Annamalai Swami including Sri Sundaram Swami who was the care-taker and disciple of Annamalai Swami for 21 years, began to attend these *satsangs*. Annamalai Swami before his *mahasamadhi* had told Sundaram Swami that another living enlightened master will come to guide him towards enlightenment. Sundaram Swami and other trustees were able to recognise Sri Mahaprabu, as the living enlightened master that Sri Annamalai Swami had predicted and have been continuing their spiritual *sadhana* under the guidance of Sri Mahaprabu till date.

Various seekers of the Truth from different parts of Tamil Nadu and abroad started attending *satsang* with Sri Mahaprabu. Among them, Sri Mahaprabu began to guide only those seekers who are sincere, dedicated and truly committed to realising the Truth in this very birth. His *satsangs* and meditation camps are happening regularly in Paliapattu, Tiruvannamalai.

Satsang

Being in *satsang* with Sri Mahaprabu is like simultaneously diving to the deepest depths of *Jnana* and soaring to the highest peaks of *Bhakti*, shepherded throughout by a sweet and fragrant power that is none other than Love.

Since it is the Supreme Power that speaks and acts through that bodily frame, **there are no traditional rules, methods, techniques, not even scheduled timings. Yet *satsang* happens as sure as day follows night and night, day.**

During *satsang*, hours can pass by like minutes, as we join him in meditation, or melting to his devotional singing, or listening to the words of great *Jnanis* (Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Adi Sankaracharya, Buddha, Osho, Sadhu Om, Avudaya Akkal and Vallalar Swamigal to name a few) or just sitting spellbound by the words of wisdom that flow so beautifully and spontaneously from Sri Mahaprabu's lips. Words that shatter all preconceived notions, **resulting in a clarity that no book or teacher can ever come close to giving.** Only a *Brahma Jnani* like Mahaprabu can.

No question goes unanswered. And yet he reminds us that it is the questioner that needs to disappear. "Meditation is always happening," he says. "It is the one who wants to meditate, that needs to dissolve. **The Experience being sought is already there and is not something to be attained. It happens only when "you" are not there to experience it.**"

Satsang with Mahaprabu is undoubtedly the greatest, best-kept secret, not just in Tiruvannamalai but in this entire world.

Perfection

Just being in Sri Mahaprabu's presence and observing how he carries himself, gives you a glimpse into what perfection is. **Every movement, every gesture,**

every word comes from a point of total calm, total presence, without the slightest agitation whatsoever; whether he is in the market or in *satsang*.

Next to him, our actions stand in stark contrast; hurried on the outside, spurred by the turbulence inside. And he knows it. Nothing escapes his watchfulness, even though he is not looking at you. “With Awareness, With Awareness” are the words you will hear him say so often.

Unique approach

A look back at history reveals how the Supreme Power manifests itself as *Brahma Jnanis* in different eras; each of them so different in their post-enlightenment life as it were. Some stay silent, some serve as a beacon to those who come, while others become a light that spreads far and wide.

Sri Mahaprabu’s uniqueness is this: Once he embraces a sincere seeker, **he comes down to his or her level, working tirelessly with the seeker, day after day, at every step in the journey.** And he even says as much, that “ensuring the disciple attains *Jnana* in this very life, is all that I work for.” Such is the boundless love and compassion that he IS.

Sri Mahaprabu continuously **creates situations for the disciple** to serve and be in *satsang* with him. It is this combination of *satsang* and *seva*, classroom-learning and real-world practice, in close contact with the Guru that weakens the grip of the ego over time. And after continuous, repeated erosion, it finally surrenders. “Only when you have totally surrendered, can the Truth even enter”, says Mahaprabu.

Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi once said, “A disciple in the hands of a Guru, is like prey caught in the mouth of a tiger. There is no escape possible.” **That Tiger is Sri Mahaprabu.**

Publications

Sri Satguru Annamalai Swamigal Spiritual Trust

In Tamil

Sri Bhagavanum Adiyenum
Kadaisi Varthaigal

In Telugu

Bhagavan Adugujadalalo
Annamalai Swami Anthima Sambashanamulu

In English

Nectar Drops: The Diary of Sri Annamalai Swamigal
Nectar Drops: The Diary of Sri Annamalai Swamigal, Digital Edition
Living by the words of Bhagavan
Annamalai Swami – Final Talks
Annamalai Swami – Final Talks, Digital Edition

CDs and DVDs

Ribhu Gita chanting in Tamil by Sri Annamalai Swami
Video interview of Sri Annamalai Swami - Jim Lemkin
Video interview of Sri Annamalai Swami - Madhukar Thompson
Video talk of Sri Annamalai Swami - Meera
Video interview of Sri Annamalai Swami - Arunachala Ashrama

Website

A website dedicated to Sri Annamalai Swamigal is available at
www.SriAnnamalaiSwami.org

Photos

Selected photographs of Sri Annamalai Swamigal and samples of his handwriting are available for devotees.

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